

THE CLERGY REVIEW

DECEMBER, 1951

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The CLERGY REVIEW

NEW SERIES VOL. XXXVI No. 6 DECEMBER 1951

THE CENTENARY OF CHALCEDON

THE perspective of history is needed to evaluate great events. This has often been said; but its truth is felt with particular force, when the early oecumenical Councils of the Church are being considered. The many incidental issues they involved and the complicated web of circumstances in which they were held tended to obscure to contemporaries their importance and the value of their achievement. The rivalries between the great Eastern sees, the clash of personalities, the mutual misunderstandings of terminology, and the unhappy interference of the Emperor in Church affairs almost buried from view the fundamental definitions and decisions. It was the insistence of Rome that upheld these; and when all else had disappeared, the creeds and the formularies remained as an achieved basis for further doctrinal development. The great Councils stand out now as providential stages in the history of dogmas, and the formulas they approved have enabled the Church to gain that fruitful knowledge of the mysteries of faith which it is the work of theology to promote.

The formulation of the dogma of the hypostatic union was not reached without a protracted period of controversy, and in this the work of two early Councils was decisive. There were two phases in the struggle. The first led to the Council of Ephesus, which defined the unity of person in Christ against Nestorianism; in the second the Council of Chalcedon insisted on the distinction of the two natures, divine and human, against the monophysitism of Eutyches. The revealed truth that Jesus Christ is both God and man found in this way its apt expression: one divine person in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division or separation; two distinct natures joined in the unity of one hypostasis or person. Further controversies were to follow, but "à partir du concile de Chalcédoine, la terminologie et le sens exact du dogme catholique sont fixés définitivement".¹

¹ A. Michel, *Hypostatique (Union)*, D.T.C., VII, c. 484.

The life of the Church is continuous, and this enables it to look back upon these early Councils, as upon integral parts of its life, still living in their teaching and their effects. In 1931, the fifteenth centenary of the Council of Ephesus prompted Pope Pius XI to do this, and he wrote a commemorative Encyclical *Lux veritatis*, in which he described the work and the enduring significance of the Council.¹ October of this year brought in its turn the fifteenth centenary of Chalcedon, and Pope Pius XII, recalling the letter of his predecessor, issued the Encyclical *Sempiternus Rex*, in which he summons us to celebrate the event, and to reflect once more on the teaching of this, the fourth oecumenical Council.²

In the prologue to his Letter the Pope declares the aim he has had in view in writing it: "duo prae ceteris emergunt et eminent, quae quantum fieri potest, in apicem proferre volumus: nempe Romani Pontificis primatus, qui e gravissima fidei christologica controversia aperte eluxit, ac magnum pondus atque momentum Chalcedonensis in re dogmatica definitionis". He goes on to say that these two points provide a lesson for dissidents; that the second should also be reflected upon by those modern writers who depart from the traditional terminology in this matter; and that all Catholics should draw from the event and its teaching a stimulus for their life of faith.

The body of the Encyclical may be divided into three main parts. In the first, the Pope briefly outlines the history of the Council, beginning with the teaching of Eutyches and closing with a description of the Council itself. The second section is doctrinal; the meaning and significance of the Tome of St Leo and of the dogmatic definition of the Council are analysed, and some observations are made on the application of this teaching to two present doctrinal errors. The exhortation, which forms the third and concluding part, is a moving appeal for unity, addressed with particular emotion and force to the Eastern dissidents.

The historical account in the Encyclical opens with Eutyches. This celebrated archimandrite, called justly by St Leo "multum imprudens et nimis imperitus", was the author of the

¹ A.A.S., XXIII (1931), pp. 493-517.

² A.A.S., XLIII (1951), pp. 625-44.

whole controversy. The Pope gives his erroneous assertions as they are found in the second letter of Flavian to Leo the Great: before the Incarnation, there were two natures of Christ, human and divine; but after the union they became one nature; and the body of Christ was not consubstantial with us or with her who bore Him according to the flesh. There is little point in attempting to perceive a coherent view behind these statements or to reconcile them with others made by the same monk. As Jugie remarks: "Il est très difficile de savoir quelle a été au juste la doctrine personnelle d'Eutychès. Cela vient sans doute de ce qu'il ne le savait pas très bien lui-même."¹

Though hardly worthy of notice as regards the intrinsic value of his theology, on other counts Eutyches was not a man who could be ignored. His influence was widespread; renowned as an ascetic, he was in touch with many all over the Eastern world. Dioscorus, the patriarch of Alexandria, was his supporter, and his god-child Chrysaphius was all-powerful at court. Alarm began to be shown at the spread of his ideas, and eventually the crisis was precipitated by the public denunciation of his heresy made by Eusebius of Dorylaeum in a synod at Constantinople.

The Encyclical rapidly sketches the familiar sequence of events. Eutyches was condemned at the synod. He had, however, no intention of submitting, and quickly the forces that supported him gathered together under the leadership of Dioscorus. The Emperor, Theodosius II, influenced in his favour, decided to call a general council at Ephesus. The Pope did not oppose this, and sent his legates, entrusting them with several letters, amongst which was the famous doctrinal letter to Flavian, known as the Tome of St Leo. In this he expounded in clear terms the traditional teaching on the Incarnation, and laid his finger on the heretical character of Eutyches' assertions. But the council was a mockery, and has been known to posterity under the term with which Leo so aptly dubbed it—the "Latrocinium" or "Robber-band". Dioscorus carried the day by force. The letter of Leo was not even read; Flavian was deposed from the see of Constantinople, and died shortly afterwards; other orthodox bishops were likewise deprived of their positions. Once more in the East heresy temporarily triumphed.

¹ *Eutychès et Eutychianisme*, D.T.C., V, c. 158-9.

In relating these events, Pius XII brings into relief the remarkable personality of Leo the Great. As a writer in *L'Osservatore Romano* has remarked,¹ he describes the illustrious Pontiff in language of which the turn of phrase and the rhythm of construction recall the majestic Leonine prose itself:

. . . cuius splendidae solidaeque virtutes, vigil religionis et pacis studium, veritatis et Romanae Cathedrae dignitatis strenua tuitio, modulatissimo eloquio par in agendis rebus dexteritas in inexplebilem sui admirationem cuncta aeva traducunt.

It seemed in vain, however, that Pope Leo endeavoured to remedy the situation after the *Latrocinium*; yet he was to see truth vindicated. The opportunity came unexpectedly. Theodosius was killed by a fall from his horse, and Catholic influences assumed the ascendancy. Pulcheria and Marcian, the new rulers, began at once to undo the work of the Robber-synod. Peace was made with Rome; the Grand Chamberlain Chrysaphius was executed; bishops were restored to their sees; the body of Flavian was brought with pomp to Constantinople; and support for the party of Eutyches soon fell away. In view of these developments, the turmoil of a new council seemed unnecessary to the mind of Pope Leo, but he ceded to the earnest insistence of the Emperor, and it was convoked.

The Council met at Chalcedon in Bithynia, and under the guidance of the papal legates it proceeded to condemn and depose Dioscorus, to accept with acclamation the Tome of St Leo, and to formulate and approve a new dogmatic definition. The Encyclical emphasizes the part played by the papal legates and the exercise and recognition of the primacy of Rome thereby displayed.

Before passing on to discuss the doctrinal content of the two documents mentioned, the Holy Father pauses to say a few words about the shadow on the achievement of Chalcedon, the notorious twenty-eighth canon. This, it must be noticed, was passed in the absence of the papal delegates; it was in fact approved by only one hundred and eighty-four of the five hundred or so bishops attending the Council. It began by reaffirming the third canon of Constantinople (381), which had

¹ *L'Osservatore Romano*, Supplemento n. 192, 17 Settembre, 1951, p. 4.

granted the primacy of honour after the bishop of Rome to the bishop of that city. It acknowledged the primacy of the Roman see, but attributed its origin to the civic importance of the former imperial capital. The position, it continued, of the New Rome demanded that similar privileges should be given to its bishop; and it then granted the right to ordain the metropolitans of Pontus, Asia, and Thrace to the Constantinopolitan see. Rome, however, had never recognized the third canon of Constantinople, and the papal delegates vehemently opposed this new formulation of Byzantine pretensions. On hearing of it, Pope Leo did the same, and he wrote indignantly to the Emperor, the Empress, and the Patriarch Anatolius. All efforts to persuade him to confirm the canon failed. Finally, after some delay, Anatolius under pressure from the Emperor sent a letter of submission and apology, which the Encyclical cites. Leo accepted it as satisfactory. The words and intentions of the Patriarch may have been sincere; yet in practice the canon remained in force—a seed that was to bring forth evil fruit.

But let us leave aside this unhappy matter and consider the real work of the Council, the defining of Christological doctrine. The Pope begins the second and doctrinal part of his Encyclical by recalling the acceptance of the Tome of St Leo by the Fathers of the Council, and the making by them of a new dogmatic definition.

It was in the third session that the Tome was read, and it evoked the following response:

Haec patrum fides, haec Apostolorum fides. Omnes ita credimus, orthodoxi ita credunt. Anathema ei qui ita non credit. Petrus per Leonem ita locutus est.

When, on the other hand, the representatives of the Emperor requested that a new formula of faith should be promulgated the suggestion was received with reluctance by the papal legates and the assembly. Nevertheless, as the Emperor persisted in his desire, a commission was formed to draw up the document. After one abortive attempt, it succeeded in its task, and constructed a dogmatic definition that was unanimously approved.

After recalling these circumstances, the Pope discusses firstly the Tome and then the Definition.

The famous Tome is a remarkable document ; it is a vigorous and concise synthesis of the traditional doctrine on the Incarnation as it had been developed in the Church. St Leo did not write it as a work of theological speculation ; his intention was simply to give in a short exposition the teaching of the great theological writers, chiefly Western but also Eastern, in order to show forth the true faith and to condemn the errors of Eutyches. "This is the traditional doctrine," he proclaims ; and the clarity and simplicity of his language have ranked the letter among the most important of doctrinal statements. As Tixeront wrote : "Cette lettre a joué dans l'antiquité un rôle considérable, et a toujours été regardée comme un document dogmatique de premier ordre. Le souffle théologique y est cependant beaucoup plus faible que dans les oeuvres de saint Cyrille, et la spéculation proprement dite n'y occupe aucune place. Saint Léon ne veut ni discuter, ni démontrer : il prononce et il juge. Il reproduit simplement la doctrine de Tertullien et de saint Augustin, celle des orientaux dans ce qu'elle a de correct ; mais il l'expose avec une netteté et une vigueur remarquables, et surtout dans un style dont on avait, en occident, perdu le secret."¹

It was after the *Latrocinium* that the Pontiff added to his letter a series of extracts from the Fathers, chosen to support and illustrate its teaching. The legates took this collection to Chalcedon together with the Tome. Later, when he had occasion to write another doctrinal letter or tome to the Emperor Leo I, he again added these *Testimonia* ; it is disputed, however, whether this dossier differed or not from the first. These citations give some indication of the immediate sources of the letter. In the introduction to his edition of the Tome, C. Silva-Tarouca noted this, and remarked in especial the influence of St Hilary of Poitiers : "Immediatos vero fontes doctrinae s. Leonis de Verbo incarnato in iis patrum, latinorum praecipue, scriptis inventuri sumus, quorum elenchum *Testimonia* utrique tomo adnexa exhibent. Inter ista s. Hilarii Pictavensis libros XII *De Trinitate* seu *De Fide* aa. 356-359 in exilio con-

¹ *Histoire des dogmes*, 6e éd., III, p. 86.

scriptos, maximum in tomi auctorem influxum exercuisse existimo . . ."¹

In the Encyclical, Pope Pius XII gives the principal points of St Leo's doctrine, illustrating each with appropriate extracts from the letter. The statements of Eutyches are condemned, while at the same time the unity of person in Christ is firmly asserted. The distinction of the two natures is expressly maintained, and this is seen to involve a distinction of properties and of operations:

Salva igitur proprietate utriusque naturae, et in unam coeunte personam, suscepta est a maiestate humilitas, a virtute infirmitas, ab aeternitate mortalitas. . . . Tenet enim sine defectu proprietatem suam utraque natura.

On the other hand, the consequence of the unity of person, the *communicatio idiomatum*, which St Cyril had insisted upon against Nestorius, is clearly recognized.

"Haec ex Evangelio hausta celsaque doctrina," continues the Pope, "id haud diffitens quod in Ephesina Synodo decretum fuerat, reicit Eutychem, dum non parcit Nestorio; eidemque absolute perfecteque resonat Chalcedonensis Concilii dogmatica definitio, quae pariter in Christo duas distinctas naturas unamque personam perspicue et presse pronuntiat." Then follows the key passage from the Chalcedonian Definition of Faith.

The Definition, approved in the fifth session of the Council, consists of a prologue, the Creeds of Nicaea and Constantinople, and a new formula of Christological doctrine. An analysis of the text of this latter section reveals that it is formed of elements taken from the Tome of Leo itself, from the Symbol of Union sent by John of Antioch to St Cyril of Alexandria, and perhaps also from the second letter of Flavian to the Pope.² An English translation of part of it will serve to illustrate the comments of the Encyclical:

. . . one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, confessed in two natures without confusion, without change, without

¹ S. Leonis Magni tomus ad Flavianum . . . ad codicum fidem recensuit C. Silva-Tarouca. *Textus et documenta, Series theologica* 9. Rome, 1932. P. 13.

² Cf. Th. Camelot, *Théologies grecques et théologie latine à Chalcedoine*, in *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, XXXV (1951), pp. 407-8.

division, without separation. The difference of the natures being in no wise destroyed by reason of their union, but rather the characteristic property of each nature being preserved, and meeting in one person and one hypostasis; not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son and Only-begotten, God, Word, Lord, Jesus Christ. . . .¹

This formulary, asserts the Pope, represents no dereliction of the Council of Ephesus. Far from abandoning the teaching of the latter, it perfects it, especially in regard to the terminology used. It is in fact precisely the removal of ambiguity in expression that gives the Definition of Chalcedon its value. In it, he notes, the terms "person" (*πρόσωπον*) and "hypostasis" (*ὑπόστασις*) are made equivalent to each other; while the term "nature" (*φύσις*) is kept distinct from both, and is given the same signification as "essence" (*οὐσία*). In this way, the terminology of Christological doctrine is brought into line with that used for the Trinity:

Usitato igitur et puro sermone dicendum est in Deo unam esse naturam, tres personas; in Christo autem unam personam, duas naturas.

The Council of Chalcedon was a victory for the terminology of St Leo over the more deficient modes of expression used by St Cyril of Alexandria. The latter's famous phrase, "One Incarnate Nature of God the Word", was left aside. The Patriarch of Alexandria himself had indeed understood it in an orthodox sense, since, as the Pope remarks, "naturam ad ipsam personam significandam transferret"; but it was ambiguous. The clearer phraseology of Chalcedon marked a progress in theology. It did so, however, at a cost. Misunderstood, the Council provoked a reaction of which the repercussions still remain today. Many saw in its decrees a rejection of the teaching of St Cyril, and falsely supposing that they must choose between the Pope and their great Doctor they chose the latter. They suspected a re-emergence of Nestorianism in the language of the Tome, and so, though repudiating Eutyches, they broke away from the

¹ The translation is that of Mgr Myers given in *The Incarnation*. Cambridge Summer School Papers, edited by C. Lattey, S.J. P. 124.

orthodox. True, an attentive study of the different documents would have shown the fundamental accord between Ephesus and Chalcedon, between Cyril and Leo; but the passions aroused and the personal questions involved were far from providing the necessary tranquillity of atmosphere.

Pius XII calls to mind this sad aftermath of the great Council, and deplores the misunderstandings that separated, and still separate, many from the true fold. Their differences with the Catholic Church are largely a question of words, and the Pope shows this by quoting a statement of Nerses IV, Catholicos of Armenia in the twelfth century. Looking towards the Monophysite Churches of Egypt, Abyssinia, Syria, and Armenia, the Supreme Pontiff appeals to them:

... viderint ipsi, quos supra amanter et dolenter memoravimus, an fas sit et expediat se, praesertim ob quandam initio exortam verborum ambiguitatem, adhuc distinere ab Ecclesia una et sancta.

Two modern Christological errors now draw the attention of the Pope. The first is the so-called Kenotic theory. Although this had its origin in Lutheran Germany, it is now prevalent chiefly amongst Anglicans. Bishop Gore first gave it wide publicity in this country. The Encyclical dismisses it briefly with a citation from Leo the Great.¹

Of far greater interest is the treatment of the second error, which concerns a matter of recent controversy among Catholic theologians. The relevant passage reads as follows:

Quamvis nihil prohibeat quominus humanitas Christi, etiam psychologica via ac ratione, altius investigetur, tamen in arduis huius generis studiis non desunt qui plus aequo vetera linquant, ut nova astruant et auctoritate ac definitione Chalcedonensis Concilii perperam utantur, ut a se elucubrata suffulciant.

Hi humanae Christi naturae statum et conditionem ita provehunt ut eadem reputari videatur subiectum quoddam sui iuris, quasi in ipsius Verbi persona non subsistat. At Chalcedonense Concilium, Ephesino prorsus congruens, lucide asserit utramque

¹ An account of the Kenotic theories by Mgr Knox is to be found in the volume of the *Cambridge Summer School Papers* already cited, pp. 211-28.

Redemptoris nostri naturam "in unam personam atque subsistentiam" convenire vetatque duo in Christo poni individua, ita ut aliquis "homo assumptus", integrae autonomiae compos, penes Verbum collocetur.

A series of texts from Scripture is added to bring into prominence the meaning of the unity of person in Christ, and the words of St Thomas and St Leo are quoted to emphasize the same truth.

There is little doubt that the Encyclical is here referring to the views of L. Seiller, O.F.M., whose article "La psychologie humaine du Christ et l'unicité de personne", published in the periodical *Franziskanische Studien* (1948-49), was recently placed on the Index.¹

At the basis of the article is the author's defence of the position held by Déodat de Basly, O.F.M. (1862-1937) in respect to the "Assumptus Homo". The Christological theories of this Franciscan theologian have caused much debate amongst theologians. De Basly claimed to be developing the true teaching of Scotus; and he regarded the formula "Assumptus Homo" as the most apt expression of the hypostatic union, though it is not part of the terminology of the *Doctor Subtilis* himself. His view on the mode of union of the two natures in Christ led him to controversial considerations on the human psychology of the "Assumptus Homo". Seiller has in several previous works defended this system, and the work condemned develops its application to the question of Christ's human psychological personality. He maintains the complete autonomy of action of the human nature, and even speaks of there being in Christ "l'individu humain" and "l'individu divin".²

In a commentary on the condemnation, published in *L'Osservatore Romano* and given in a French version in *L'Ami du Clergé*,³ Michael Browne, O.P., Master of the Apostolic Palace, discusses the reasons for the decree. He recalls that the formula "Assumptus Homo" was used by some of the Fathers, especially those before the Council of Ephesus. They understood it, however, in an orthodox sense; and St Thomas, while declaring it

¹ A.A.S., XLIII (1951), p. 561.

² For the controversy prior to the condemnation, see *L'Ami du Clergé*, 1951, pp. 325-9.

³ 1951, pp. 523-4.

to be "non proprie dictum", explains the manner in which it must be interpreted in these authors.¹ "Mais," continues the Dominican, "le P. Seiller, comme d'autres théologiens, prend l'*Assumptus Homo* dans le sens d'un sujet humain distinct du Verbe, doué d'une entière autonomie dans son activité, jusqu'au point de constituer un Moi et une personnalité psychologique *a se*." He then lists seven of the untenable assertions of the theologian, from which we select the following: "Le nom de Jésus-Christ, proprement, *in recto*, signifie l'*Homo Assumptus*, non le Verbe, auquel il se rapporte seulement *in obliquo*, c'est-à-dire en vertu de ce qui est appelé la communication des idiomes; l'*Homo Assumptus* est le principe autonome de son activité, sur quoi le Verbe n'influe point personnellement; l'*Homo Assumptus* n'est pas simplement quelque chose, mais est *Quelqu'un*; l'*Homo Assumptus*, l'Homme uni au Verbe et non le Verbe même est la haute personnalité constituée par Dieu aimant, médiateur, prêtre et roi entre le genre humain et le Dieu-Trinité."

Father Browne goes on to say that he does not contest the lawfulness of distinguishing between ontological personality and psychological personality. Consequently, "psychologiquement, on pourrait parler de la personnalité humaine du Christ, mais seulement en se référant au Verbe même dans la mesure où il subsiste et agit dans la nature humaine assumée hypostatiquement. Mais en faisant du Moi humain du Christ un sujet autonome, voire seulement psychologiquement, en excluant de l'activité de la nature assumée le Verbe comme principe agent, on court le risque d'affirmer implicitement aussi un Moi humain ontologique, revenant ainsi à la position erronée de Nestorius". It should be noted however, in view of the different approaches to this matter amongst theologians, that these last remarks of the learned Dominican are somewhat wider in their import than the words of the Encyclical.

The last part of *Sempiternus Rex* is devoted to an appeal to the Easterns to return to the unity of the Church. The Council, notes the Holy Father, was an assembly of Eastern bishops, and is principally their glory. There, under the guidance of the Holy See, they defined the doctrine of the unity of Christ, one Person

¹ III, 4, 3, ad 1.

in two natures. It is sad that they should be outside the unity of the mystical Body, of which the hypostatic union is the most striking exemplar.

The Pope recalls his efforts to make their return to the Catholic Church easier, and relates how he helped without distinction both dissidents and Catholics in the recent war. He realizes that there are many obstacles to unity; yet he knows too the power of prayer. The tranquil and dispassionate reconstruction and consideration of past events, more customary now than in former times, is also a way to achieve the desired end.

There is today a motive that urgently calls for unity: the hatred and ferocity of the enemies of God and of Christ. The sufferings of many for the Christian faith are a plea to all to embrace the unity of the Church:

Vincula, cruciatus, tormenta, gemitus, cruor eorum qui, noti vel ignoti, innumera multitudo, recens et nunc quoque ob virtutis constantiam et christianae fidei professionem perpassi sunt et perpetiuntur, voce quadam in dies resonantiore ad sanctam huiusmodi amplexandam Ecclesiae unitatem omnes compellunt.

Spes reditus fratrum et filiorum, iam diu ab Apostolica hac Sede dissidentium, fortior facta est ex tot aliorum fratrum filiorumque asperata et cruentata martyrii cruce: nemo salutare Dei opus impediatur aut neglegatur!

The Encyclical then concludes with an exhortation to make the present centenary an occasion for the strengthening of faith in Christ, God and Man, our Redeemer.

CHARLES DAVIS

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION AND PURITY¹

THE various pronouncements of the recent Popes, the guidance given us by the Hierarchy, and the conclusions reached after some forty years of increasing discussion among the clergy and laity, have clarified a good many aspects of our

¹ A paper read to the Conferences of Catholic Colleges, Low Week, 1951.

Catholic attitude to the problem of Sex-Instruction. It is clear, in the first place, that this duty of sex-instruction rests primarily on the parents, and not on the School or Church. This point has been so plainly put by Pope Pius XI as to need no elaboration.¹ Yet it is equally clear that parents in general are not performing this duty. The English Bishops consider "the failure on the part of many parents to fulfil the obligation which is theirs of instructing their children in the things which concern the welfare of body and soul" to be one of the two chief causes of the present accentuation of the sex-instruction problem. "There is today," they say, "a lamentable decline in family education, due largely to an ever-increasing tendency on the part of parents deliberately to shirk their obvious duty."² This parental negligence has had two consequences, each presenting its own problem, and these two consequences are so linked as to form a vicious circle.

First there is the present parental irresponsibility and negligence, which is due largely to their inability to cope with their responsibilities; "Even good parents feel themselves unprepared or ill-equipped for their work as educators." Secondly, and following from this, we have the fact that children, left more or less to themselves, and not given much positive help, are growing up without the sane Catholic attitude towards sex. These children are the parents of the future, and so the cycle is likely to be repeated. In attempting to break this vicious circle, which should be our first consideration? Should we concentrate on the instruction of the children, so that when they are parents they will be better able to cope with their duties? Or should we concentrate on the parents of today, by insisting on their duties to their children?

The Bishops have given us our answer. "The encouragement of parental responsibility will be the first endeavour of the Church." "As regards the parental instruction in the matters concerned, we are convinced that herein lies the chief cause and the remedy which is being sought."³ Pope Pius XI appealed to all pastors of souls "to use every means, by catechism and instruction, by word of mouth and in widely published writings,

¹ *Casti Connubii*, 1930; *Divini Illius Magistri*, 1929

² Joint Pastoral of the English Bishops, 1944.

³ *Ibid.*

to ensure that Christian parents are well instructed both in general and in particular regarding their duties in the religious, moral and civic education of their children".¹

America already has its Cana Conferences (retreats for married couples) and its Marriage Courses to prepare parents for the duties of their state. As for England—"There can be little doubt," writes Fr Leycester King, "that the times call for the immediate establishment of courses of expert lectures on this and other aspects of family-craft."² But it seems that we shall not adequately reach the parents until there are marriage courses held regularly, perhaps every year, in each Deanery in the country. Until then the immediate establishment of a correspondence marriage course would achieve good results.

At the present time, many parents, admirable in every way, confess themselves psychologically incapable of giving their children the requisite guidance. There seem to be two reasons for this. A special embarrassment attaches to speaking for the first time of sex to one's own children. Parents are—naturally enough—affected by human respect, and wonder what the reaction of the children will be. This difficulty would be overcome if only parents would accustom themselves to answering their children's questions, truthfully yet discreetly, from their earliest years. A second reason for this psychological state lies in the upbringing of the parents themselves. If this has resulted in an attitude to sex which is strained or faulty, it will show itself in an extreme reticence, amounting sometimes to a positive refusal to speak to their children on these matters. The heretical notion that matter in general, and sex in particular, are intrinsically evil is still common in the world.

Therefore it should be our first aim to recall parents to their responsibilities; at the same time we ought, for a generation at least, to concentrate on giving our children a formation which will raise up parents having the balanced Catholic attitude to sex. They will then be more capable of carrying out their obligations to their children.

The English Bishops state the problem concerning children in these words: "Unfortunately, until parents are better equipped for their task, and do in fact carry out their obligations, there

¹ *Divini Illius Magistri*.

² *Sex-enlightenment and the Catholic*, p. 27.

will always be some children lacking in the knowledge of those things intended by God for their own progress in virtue and for the fulfilment of God's designs."¹ Until parents resume their responsibility, their children will lack something necessary to their progress in virtue; until then, therefore, we, as priests and as teachers, cannot do otherwise than declare a state of emergency, and do what we can to help the children growing up under our care.

This problem has also been solved for us, at least in so far as a principle has been laid down. The Congregation of the Holy Office was asked in 1931 whether it would approve the procedure known as "sex-education" or "sexual-initiation"; the answer was in the negative, and the Church's solution given, in these words: "... special care is to be paid to the complete, solid, and continuous religious instruction of the youth of both sexes; awakening in them a high regard and desire for, and a love of the angelical virtue . . ."² This principle was quoted and endorsed in the Joint Pastoral of the English Bishops.

The Holy Office made this reply in 1931. The Bishops issued their Joint Pastoral in 1944. Yet the need of our children is as great now as ever before, if not greater. Why is this? We must presume that the solution given by the Church is an adequate one. Religious instruction, if of the right type, will solve the problem. Does it not seem, therefore, that there must be something lacking in our instruction of Youth in this matter of purity? Granting the need of more careful language while treating of this virtue, have our instructions regarding purity been "complete, solid, and continuous", of such a nature as to awaken "a high regard and desire for, and a love of, purity"?

Fr Kirsch, O.F.M.Cap., gives it as his opinion that "much of the catechism instruction on the sixth commandment is probably useless because of its being so vague and indefinite".³ "There seems little doubt that difficulties in the realm of purity rank as the adolescent boy's top-ranking problem."⁴ If we admit this, then surely our instructions on purity ought to be as precise as circumstances permit. "In treating the difficult Command-

¹ Joint Pastoral.

² Rescript 21 March, 1931.

³ Felix M. Kirsch, O.F.M.Cap.: "Teaching the Sixth Commandment", *Journal of Religious Instruction*, 1937, pp. 698-710.

⁴ Urban Fleece, *Self-revelation of the Adolescent Boy*, p. 359.

ment," writes Fr Kirsch, "teachers should always be specific in their instructions." I myself know of a priest who told a class of boys that every deliberate sin of impurity was a serious mortal sin, without making an attempt to explain impurity; as well tell a blindfold boy that there exists an abyss close by, and leave him blindfold.

If the religious instruction recommended by authority is to be really effective in leading to a love of purity, it seems necessary that the boy should know what purity is. We cannot love what we do not know. Yet it would seem that to understand what purity is requires some understanding of God's plan for the procreation of children through marriage, and some notion as to what is meant by the marriage act itself.

Once a boy has this knowledge, purity can be readily explained; that the pleasures accompanying the marriage act are "good, lawful, in fact holy"¹ in marriage; but that, except between husband and wife, such pleasures are impure and offend God. Purity becomes a more positive virtue once God's plan is realized. Such knowledge seems particularly necessary for boys, since in boys the natural physical occurrences of erection and night-loss are pleasurable, and therefore material for temptation.

Without this knowledge of God's order, purity remains entirely negative. For if a boy does not know something of marriage, where sex reaches its positive fulfilment, it is the present forbidden acts which become temptingly positive to his mind, an expanse of pleasure from which he is being excluded for some reason he cannot quite fathom. Avoiding impurity remains a case of "You mustn't", "Why not?" "Because you mustn't", and, because lacking in reason, it becomes more difficult than it need be.

While many might agree theoretically that this degree of knowledge is needed for an understanding of the moral obligations concerning purity, they would evade any subsequent difficulty by saying that any boy is bound to reach such a degree of knowledge as he grows up. I disagree. This may have been the case years ago when families lived in the country or in over-

¹ "This principle should be clearly taught to all adolescents." Memorandum on sex-education published with the approval of the Scottish Bishops.

crowded city tenements. But it seems that the modern boy can grow up, apparently utterly sophisticated, and with a disturbing knowledge of sexual aberrations and all manner of things we should prefer him not to know, yet strangely ignorant of the simple facts. Unless, therefore, he is told these basic facts, either by parent or by other responsible person, it cannot and should not be presumed that he knows of God's plan for the right use of sex.

But how can we give him this minimum knowledge?

In default of parental instruction, a private talk between priest and boy would undoubtedly be most desirable.¹ One could then give help like that which ought to come from the parent, by the intimacy and naturalness of one's explanation, and by resolving any individual difficulties the boy may have. But such a method, judging by what headmasters have told me, seems practically impossible, at least in day schools; impossible from the point of view of time and of opportunity, for each interview must be quite uninterrupted, and in a single form there may be from eighty to a hundred boys. There will also be the temptation for the boys to "compare notes" where the interviews are private.

I should like to consider how much of the knowledge indispensable to a love of purity can be effectively and prudently communicated in class, i.e. in public. One's immediate reaction is to reject such a suggestion out of hand, as being forbidden. But there is a need to distinguish carefully between degrees of sex-instruction, varying from the fullest physiological detail to the simplest exposition of the origin of children. It is unfor-

¹ Some would advocate that this might be given in the confessional. The Holy Office (16 May, 1943) has forbidden detailed and biological instruction in the confessional: "*Itidem ne audeat confessarius, seu sponte seu rogatus, de natura vel modo actus quo vita transmittitur poenitentes docere, atque ad id nullo unquam praetextu adducatur.*" Some are inclined to conclude from this declaration of the Holy Office that all mention of the subject is now forbidden in the confessional, but such a conclusion is not warranted. A confessor may still calm the fears and relieve the anxieties of a penitent by indicating, prudently, God's plan for the proper use of the sex faculty. On the other hand, it would seem better not to use the confessional as the normal place in which to give such religious instruction, for several reasons. A confessor will normally speak only when he suspects that the penitent is already worried, whereas the instruction should anticipate such worries. Moreover, the confessor will not be able to note the reactions of the penitent to what he is saying; and there is normally the question of time, affecting both priest and penitent, since the latter may feel embarrassed if long detained.

tunate that we dub them all by the same equivocal term "sex-instruction", and hence tend to tar them all with the same brush. Let us take those passages in which the Popes and Hierarchy refer to the giving of information in public.

The best known passage is that of Pope Pius XI: "Much more pernicious are the naturalistic doctrines and theories which obtrude themselves into a department of human education that bristles with difficulties; that which concerns moral integrity and chastity. Adopting a policy which is as foolish as it is fraught with danger, there are many who advocate and promote a method called by the unpleasant name of 'sex-education'. They are under the false impression that it is possible by merely natural arts, and without any of the safeguards of religion and piety, to forearm adolescents against unchastity and sensuality. They therefore initiate and instruct them all, without distinction of sex and even in public, concerning these delicate matters; worse still, they expose them to premature occasions of sin in order—so they argue—to accustom their minds to such things and so harden them against the dangers of puberty."¹ What is here reprobated is obviously a type of sex-instruction which is at once naturalistic and indiscriminate, and, in addition, public. This is the sex-instruction of the secular education authorities, abhorrent to the mind of any Christian, and quite different from what is here being discussed.

The English Bishops echo the Pope's reprobation. "Class or group instruction of children or of youth on the physiological aspect of sex would be fraught with grave dangers and would be against the traditional teaching of the Church."² Later they quote the Holy Father's words: "In this extremely delicate matter, if, all things considered, some individual instruction is found necessary and opportune from those who hold from God the commission to educate and who have the grace of state, every precaution must be taken."

They then go on to repeat the principle laid down by the Holy Office concerning a "full, firm, and uninterrupted religious instruction". Here, again, then, a contrast may be made between that more detailed instruction which, if really considered

¹ *Christian Education of Youth*. Pope Pius XI. C.T.S. S 99.

² Joint Pastoral.

necessary, must be given individually, and the simple facts needed if a boy is to understand the nature of purity. The former is exceptional; the latter necessary for all. The Popes and Bishops do not say that not even a minimum of factual knowledge may be given in public. They simply reprobate a foolhardy initiation in public by means that are purely natural; which is a very different thing.

I submit, therefore, that it is possible to give to boys, in a Religious Instruction class, the minimum of knowledge which they need to realize clearly their moral obligations with regard to purity in thought, word, and deed.

Fr Gillet, a former Master-General of the Dominicans, believes that a collective presentation is permissible "if one intends a moral teaching, the character of which precisely envelops and sweetens the technical crudity". He adds that "collectively as well as individually, there are ways of speaking clearly of chastity and of the conditions of its loss and gain, without giving to the teaching the allurements of a course in medicine or a treatise on gynaecology".¹

To take a specific example. The C.T.S. recently published a pamphlet entitled "Sex Instruction in the Home", to assist parents in instructing their children, the text of which was twice submitted to the Bishops of England and Wales, at first for their criticisms and suggestions, and then for their approval. In it is given a sample talk to boys. Could the content of that particular talk be communicated to boys in public? This is really a moral question. I accordingly consulted the moral theology professor of one of our seminaries, who allows me to quote it as his opinion that "the substance of the knowledge conveyed in the 'Talk to Boys' could safely be given by a prudent teacher to a class of boys around the age of puberty, provided it is integrated into a course of religious and moral instruction, and care is taken to avoid any expressions which are likely to bring the physical details vividly before the imagination".

Since the language used in such class instruction must be rather formal and lacking in vividness, it is less likely to be understood fully except by such boys as are sufficiently mature.

¹ M. S. Gillet, O.P., *Innocence and Ignorance*, trans. J. Elliot Ross, C.S.P., New York.

For this reason, and the better to integrate the teaching with the rest of the religious course, and because the subject constitutes one of the chief difficulties of growing boys, such talks might well be given at regular and natural intervals, occasioned by the religious syllabus itself; for example, when treating of the Commandments, of temptations, or of the conditions necessary for mortal sin. In this way one could be sure that a boy receives some help within a few months of his needing it.

Such instruction, too, would naturally be graded, so that as the boy approaches school-leaving age he will be receiving broader instruction and preparation for after-life. As part of the Higher Religious Certificate syllabus we might well introduce the notion of true human love, based on compatibility of character and mutual sympathy and understanding, rather than on a passing common interest in trivialities; we might also include the Church's attitude to mixed marriages, and drive home the arguments now, while the boy is still at school, and before he is old enough to have fallen in love with a non-Catholic. The Sixth Form could be given the rational argument for sex-control, as recently developed by Dr L. L. McReavy in *THE CLERGY REVIEW*.¹ This paper was, in point of fact, twice given in public to University students.

What has been said is not intended to discredit private instruction. We have already mentioned this as the best method failing parental instruction. We shall also have recommended the boys to go privately to their parents or their priest if in difficulty. Again, a private talk will be essential if, for example, a boy shows signs of forming or of spreading bad habits. Finally, when a boy is due to leave, a private talk will give us the opportunity, among our other advice, to sum up for him the Church's doctrine concerning purity, and to touch on the highly important topics of venereal disease and birth-control. Very possibly this will be the last time in his life that anyone will talk to him directly and frankly while his mind is still open and receptive. Such a chance is not to be missed. He will soon be in the maelstrom of life, and the truth must already be firmly established in his mind if damage, perhaps even disaster, is to be avoided.

To sum up. We have done well in reacting as we have against

¹ February 1951.

the gross, naturalistic, public methods of physiological sex-instruction, and in our own slow and deliberate approach to so delicate a problem. But it does seem time, twenty years after the formulation of the Church's solution, to make a more positive effort to implement that solution. We have the task of recalling parents to their responsibilities. We have also a duty towards the boy; in charity, to make good, as far as we can, the defects of parental instruction, and in justice, by reason of our office as priests and as teachers, to give a full instruction in virtue. This should include instruction on purity as precise and as intelligible as instruction on any other virtue, though more guarded in manner.

When all is said and done, we can never hope to solve all a boy's problems, for many of them have their roots in the very process of growing up, or in the results of Original Sin. But to some extent we can alleviate his difficulties. To hear a priest speak plainly on these matters is often a tremendous relief; it convinces the boy that the changes he notices taking place in himself are neither evil nor peculiar to himself. We can teach him, even in class, that his attractions and desires are in themselves good and designed by God, but are to be controlled throughout life, and at present by sacrifice. The virtue of purity will become increasingly clear and increasingly attractive to him. In so helping him we shall be fulfilling a delicate but important part of our duty as priests and as teachers.

AIDAN PICKERING

THE NEW HOLY CHILDHOOD DAY

MISSION SUNDAY has now been established in the Church for twenty-five years and it has had a remarkable effect in promoting the mission cause. Yet the children of the Catholic world could hardly be said to have fitted into the scheme; moreover, the Pope has a children's society for mission-aid, the Society of the Holy Childhood, which reaped

no direct benefit from it. For this reason, in December of last year, the Holy Father gave the children their own mission day.¹ It has the same status for children as Mission Sunday has for adults, and it was instituted in the same manner—at the request of the Society's Supreme Council and for the Society's benefit. It is already being described as Children's Mission Day, but it must not be forgotten that it was instituted for the benefit of the Holy Childhood Society; in the mind of the Holy See it is Holy Childhood Day, just as Mission Sunday is A.P.F. Day.

Within a month or two each parish priest in this country will find himself asked to arrange a special Holy Childhood service for the children. It is to help him in this task that this article has been written. The Bishops of England and Wales decided at the Low Week meeting in April last that the day should be observed each year on 2 February, Candlemas Day. (2 February next falls on a Saturday, and most of the dioceses are holding it on Friday, 1 February, instead.) This period of the year was chosen because the Holy See had suggested that wherever possible the day should be celebrated between Christmas and Candlemas Day, the period devoted in the Liturgy to the mysteries of the Divine Childhood. The service can take three forms, Mass, which is to be preferred, Benediction, or a service in school. In each case, Holy Childhood hymns could be sung, special prayers recited and a short talk given on the meaning of the day. If possible the celebration should not consist solely of this religious service but should include a play, concert or other festivity in school of a missionary character. The celebrations should always be concluded with the *Benedictio Puerorum* from the Roman Ritual. The National Office of the Holy Childhood has prepared copies of a service which can be used either for Mass, Benediction or the service in school. (Copies will be sent by post in early January, it is hoped, to each parish priest and convent school superior.)

Needless to say, it is for each parish priest and religious superior to decide what form the celebrations should take in view of his own circumstances and the requirements of local school regulations. Schools which devote one particular part

¹ The Pope's letter, *Praeses Consilii*, 4 December, 1950, is printed below, p. 392.

of the year to collecting for the Holy Childhood Society need not change that period so as to include the period immediately before or after 2 February. The clergy will find stories and other useful matter for a talk in the *Holy Childhood Annals*; they may find it necessary to read their copy before the children read theirs!

We are often reminded that two-thirds of the world are pagans. That grim proportion is true of the world's child population also. In other words, most of the world's children die without baptism. The chief work of the Holy Childhood Society is the baptism of these pagan children, and the priest who is anxious to interest his children in the Holy Childhood Day should make the explanation of this work the main point in his instructions. Last year the Society was responsible for over half a million baptisms. It may seem strange that it could be responsible for so many. The answer is that a high proportion of them are lay baptisms *in articulo mortis*. The sisters in their visits to the sick and poor search out dying children and baptize them. Also many are brought to Catholic hospitals. They will usually be the children of the pagan parents, whom it would not be lawful to baptize except in danger of death. There is in the circumstances no danger of odium against the Church and no infringement of the rights of the parents. Only a few days ago I met a sister with much hospital experience who had herself baptized something like ten thousand babies. Lay baptisms are particularly numerous during epidemics, for example the straw-fever at harvest time in China and the dreaded Chinese measles which has such fearful septic complications. Adults have a good chance of recovery but the babies and children die like flies.

Our children at home are taught to believe that these dying children they helped to baptize will plead for them before the throne of God. Swept away, *lucis ipso in limine*, sometimes violently, *ceu turbo nascentes rosas*, they are indeed thieves of Heaven. Surely they will be thieves of Heaven also for the priest who in spite of so much other work did what he could to teach the children at home to become the saviours of their less fortunate brothers and sisters.

Closely connected with the work of baptisms is the rescue

of unwanted children. Young babies are often abandoned by pagan parents because of poverty or, still more, superstition. The child has been born blind or with a tooth, or the witch-doctor has said that it was born on an unlucky day, and out it goes. Many parents make sure of a good home for their unwanted child by giving it to the sisters. They will sometimes hand the child over directly themselves, or if they do not wish to be known, they will ask a friend to hand it over. Another way is to leave the child carefully wrapped up at the convent door, ring the bell and hurry away. It would be easy to exaggerate this side of pagan life, and I believe that some mission propagandists have done so. Nonetheless the Catholic priest needs no reminding that where Christ's message has not been preached, the children suffer want and cruelty on a scale unknown in Christian lands.

Rescue, baptism, education; these are the three works of the Society, the education, that is, not only of rescued children but of other children also. This third work follows obviously enough; one would naturally expect the Society to provide for all the needs, spiritual and temporal, of the mission child from birth until school leaving age; after that it becomes the care of the A.P.F. It builds schools, orphanages, nurseries, maternity homes and children's hospitals. As in the parish at home, so it is here: the most essential need of a mission after the church is the school, and that the child at home helps to provide. Many of the children they rescue or help to educate grow up to be priests and nuns. Even the most enthusiastic children at home seldom realize how much they are doing in this way.

Successive Popes have frequently asked that the Society should be established in every Catholic school of the world. It is the only organization for children of which they have so spoken. In England it is established in rather less than two-fifths of the schools—640 schools out of, if I mistake not, something like 1,720. There is good reason for hoping that the Holy Childhood Day will do much to change this situation.

I know nothing more certain to destroy the work in our country than any tendency to regard it merely as a pious agency for transmitting funds. It is an apostolate, the apostolate of children for children, a world-wide crusade for souls.

The children must be shown by stories and reports from the mission fields that they are saving souls; they must be taught that prayer comes before almsgiving and that the best way they can help is by becoming missionaries of prayer. We are proud of the fact that some of our most flourishing centres in England are in orphanages which can give little in the way of alms. *Nisi Dominus*; the salvation of the heathen is a divine work and it can only be brought about in a divine way.

I speak of the good this apostolate does for the heathen child, but the good it does for the child at home is not less. "It is a great work," says Pius XI, "not merely because it sends considerable sums to the missions, but above all because it makes the children apostles." It opens up to the child vast regions of supernatural courage, heroism and love of Christ, and many priests and teachers have noted the change which came over schools when it was introduced in the full apostolic spirit. Moreover it has always been a fruitful source of vocations for home and abroad.

No human caution is called for here, but that outpouring of grace which teaches child and adult that to give to God is to receive the fuller measure in return.

JOSEPH MULLIN

OUR LADY OF FATIMA AND THE DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD

"**H**OLY FATHER imparts Paternal Apostolic Blessings to all those participating Brentwood Diocesan Pilgrimage Fatima and consecration parishes to Immaculate Heart of Mary. Signed MONTINI, Vatican City." It was with this blessing of His Holiness the Pope and that of Mgr Doubleday, Bishop of Brentwood, and of Mgr Beck, then Coadjutor Bishop of Brentwood, that the Pilgrim Virgin statue of our Lady of Fatima left her shrine at Epping on Sunday, 14 May, 1950, and set forth on her journey through the Diocese. In the course of

this pilgrimage, which terminated on 15 July this year, the statue visited some fifty-nine parish churches and chapels all over Essex and was escorted by some thousands of the faithful in their respective parishes. It was carried in the main by a group of thirteen pilgrims. The two chief journeys took place the first fortnight in July 1950 and the first week of July 1951.

These men gave up their summer holidays for the cause. Carrying their own kit and sleeping rough in church halls, in schools, even in sacristies or large rooms of country presbyteries, they made the pilgrimage not as a route march but rather as a retreat. The tramp, tramp, tramp of the day, which averaged about fourteen and a half miles, was not the be-all and end-all of their share in the work. There was daily Mass; there was daily Holy Communion; there was much prayer; for the rosary was continuous from the time of departure in the morning (about 9 a.m.) to the time of arrival in the evening (8 p.m.). It was the time-piece throughout. Four men carried the statue for the length of the rosary, then the next four took over. When there was a stop for lunch or tea two pilgrims would keep the recitation going, relieving each other in pairs. Lastly there were spiritual conferences by the wayside. The subjects varied, including such items as the explanation of the daily missal, Holy Scripture and its interpretation, the sacraments and prayer.

We all know that spiritual graces cannot be assessed in mathematical terms, but perhaps the spiritual value of such an undertaking may be shown under three headings:

A Witness.

A Message.

An introduction to Catholic Action.

A Witness

The Deputy Chairman of the Quarter Sessions of the County of X . . . who attended the arrival of the Pilgrim Virgin in a certain locality wrote afterwards: "I had been at the convent and then walked in the procession which I had thought a valuable form of 'witness', and I wish we had them more often

in the public streets." This testimony is all the more interesting coming as it does from a recent convert who had searched long and anxiously for the truth. Of course reactions can always differ. The rays of the sun will both harden one object and soften another, but the important thing is for the sun to shine—for the light to be not under a bushel but upon a candlestick.

The numbers attending the functions were great, very often in the region of a thousand, and on one occasion well beyond two thousand. Numbers impress. It would be more correct to say that the faith which inspires the multitude impresses. A typical comment in certain areas was this: "What's wrong with our Church? (meaning the Church of England). Why don't we do something—why do the Roman Catholics get away with it?" Is it not an achievement in the apathy of the present century to get our neighbour asking the question "Why?" If only we could bring that one word "Why?" to their lips more often we should succeed in drawing them gradually to the truth of Christ. A young lad of seventeen who had been an acolyte for one of the processions (the only one of his age who had had the courage to attend) remarked to his parish priest about a fortnight later: "Father, I've been defending the faith ever since." It had been all day long in the factory where he worked, "Why this?" "Why that?" "What does that mean?" "What does this mean?" And it seems to me that there was no mistaking the witness of the Pilgrim Virgin, for if the Cross, especially without a figure, is a Christian symbol that belongs to many, our Blessed Lady is a Catholic symbol that belongs to us alone. "Look," said a spectator standing on the pavement at Elm Park as we passed along, "That's Mary, they're Catholics."

A Message

The primary object of this pilgrimage, however, was not intended to be just a public expression of our love and devotion to Mary. It was meant to make known her message at Fatima and her request for the rosary, for the Family Rosary, a not unnecessary undertaking when you realize that the President of the Children of Mary in a big London parish knew nothing of this apparition. A person in an even more influential position maintained that this devotion had not even been approved by

the Church. That our Lady had made definite promises regarding world peace and the conversion of Russia was a complete revelation to innumerable souls. It is surely desirable that our people should be more enlightened on these matters, for in the words of Father Martindale, S.J., "the message of Fatima has world-wide implications to a degree that even Lourdes, on the face of it, had not."

The technique of getting rosary pledges is only just being learnt after much experience. To obtain these at a passing visit, much less at a first visit, was soon seen to be impracticable. The pilgrimage has now given place to Triduums and these are proving much more successful in this respect. What appears quite clearly is that the seed develops in God's own time and in God's own way. A certain lady wrote as follows: "My sister, who has been in America for seventeen years, came home this summer with her three children for a three months' vacation. We were saying our daily rosary, so of course she and her family joined us. She now writes to tell me that mainly due to the example here, they now also say the Family Rosary and, as she is occasionally in contact with three of my brothers in Canada, who knows what good it (the pilgrimage) will do?" The amount of good that may result can be seen from the fact that one person alone was responsible for obtaining 826 rosary pledges, many of which came from Scotland.

We learnt of a Catholic woman who had witnessed the arrival of the Pilgrim Virgin at a big London parish. She came to the service and, having heard our Lady's message, went home, told her non-Catholic husband about it and there and then the Family Rosary started in that home. There are many cases that have come to our notice of non-Catholic husbands or wives joining in the rosary at home. Who knows how far the ripples will extend?

An Introduction to Catholic Action

Don't people say that the best way to learn to swim is to jump into the water? And the best way to become an Apostle is to act as an Apostle. Now a pilgrimage seems to remove all those inhibitions which hinder so many Catholics from putting across the Gospel message to their non-Catholic neighbour. On

this pilgrimage England became once more Merrie England in the sense of Mary's England.

The café and the public house became Mary's.

The village green became Mary's.

The road became Mary's.

Factory hands, lorry drivers and farm workers in public houses stopped over their pint or their game of darts to listen to the plain chant of the *Salve Regina*. They heard, no doubt in many instances for the first time in their lives, Christian men offer a Christian prayer to the Father of all good things before and after meals. Sometimes, as on the following occasion, they heard even more. In a certain village pub where we were resting after our pint and sandwiches, the publican leaned over the counter: "Gentlemen," he said, "you haven't sung to us yet." "No," we answered, "do you want us to?" "Of course." What he expected we can only guess; what he got was a rousing hymn, the *Fatima Ave* followed by "Faith of our Fathers". If the look on his face was any criterion he seemed well pleased, and so were we, for this, we thought, was indeed Merrie England, namely Mary's England. We learnt afterwards from one of the Walsingham Cross pilgrims that when they had passed through the same locality two or three years previously the same publican had refused them the slightest hospitality. We thought we had travelled a long way that day, covering as we had nearly nine miles that morning, but after that our journey appeared very short compared with his. Here's a little story to show you how the village green became Mary's. It was a hot day and we were very tired. About 5 p.m. we came upon a beautiful village green. We placed our Lady in the middle and sang a hymn. Then came a most acceptable cup of tea. The little children came around, they were mostly boys. "Who's that beautiful lady?" They knew: "The Virgin Mary." "And who's the Virgin Mary?" Again they knew. "The Mother of God." These young lads knew about the Angel Gabriel and they had learnt the Hail Mary. The rest was easy. For about twenty minutes we had about ten little Protestant children (eight boys and two girls) saying the rosary with us before our statue whilst one of the men explained each mystery to them in turn.

One of our tasks was the distribution of leaflets. We gave them to all and sundry and we put them everywhere: in cars, in buses, in prams, in shops. The following conversation took place in a shop on one occasion. The lady behind the counter: "Who's that beautiful lady?" "That's the Blessed Virgin." "And who's the Blessed Virgin?" "She is the Mother of God." "Well, that's very interesting, I must read this" (referring to the leaflet).

Once again England became Mary's Dowry and Englishmen, whose shyness especially in religious matters is proverbial, found themselves talking about God and the things of God as naturally as they would talk about the weather or the cost of living. "One thing the pilgrimage has done for me, Father," said one pilgrim, "it has taught me not to be afraid of mentioning religion in my ordinary conversation with non-Catholics. The other night at the Savoy I discussed religion with two Jews for nearly an hour, a thing I'd never have dreamed of doing before." I always remember as a young priest shunning the individual visiting of airmen at a R.A.F. unit until one day in the company of a commissioned chaplain I realized how utterly simple and easy the whole process was. From that day to this such work has held no further difficulties for me and has become just an ordinary and interesting priestly occupation. I think the same applies here. On pilgrimage men come to realize how *possible and simple* it is to confess in a humble way the faith that is in them. What has been done once can be done again, and so each man returns home with a valuable experience to enrich henceforth the community life of his own parish, for the parish is the fundamental cell of the Mystical Body of Christ.

FRANCIS E. BURGESS, C.R.I.C.

THE FRENCH BISHOPS AND PAROCHIAL PROBLEMS

AN interesting document recently issued to the French parochial clergy with the authority of the whole French episcopate¹ has a certain relevance to our own conditions in this country, and is worthy of attention. Too often, one fears, it is the strange and startling practices of some few individuals in France that attract most attention, zealous efforts which have little support from the bishops, and which have little to recommend them except their novelty. The substance of the present directions, however, relates to the seven sacraments, and presents a strong reaction against the numerous religious movements and associations which, though all good in themselves, have in matter of fact rather neglected the channels of grace ordained by Christ himself.²

Even a casual visitor to France discovers that, in many parts, large numbers of people who call themselves Catholics do not practise their religion, apart from appearing at social events such as baptisms, marriages and funerals, and they have succeeded in classing themselves as "non-practising" Catholics, as though in the nature of things the members of the Church were divided into "practising" and "non-practising", it being a matter of choice or inclination to which category a person elects to belong. We have a similar distinction in our own country, but nothing like to the extent it is found in France, where whole regions are occupied by the non-practising class. It is a grievous problem for the French clergy, who are solving it with courage and determination, and it is not for an outsider to show them the right solution. To do so would be as impertinent as it is for a French ecclesiastic, who knows little of our conditions, to teach the Catholics of England the right way of dealing with Anglicans. What we may do, nevertheless, with perfect propriety, is to observe what is happening in Catholic France, to note the

¹ *Directoire pour la pastorale des Sacraments à l'usage du Clergé*. Adopté par l'Assemblée Plénière de l'Épiscopat pour tous les Diocèses de France. Bonne Presse. Pp. 79. 1s. 9d.

² Cf. pp. 26, 27, 29, 33.

differences of opinion found there, and to understand sympathetically the bishops' directives.

Two divergent schools of thought, as it were, confronted them, the one inclining to severity and the other to indulgence. The one maintained that to administer sacraments to people who come for them almost entirely for social reasons, as a routine which all decent people observe, can only serve to dechristianize the population; and their administration in such circumstances appears to be opposed to certain theological and canonical principles. The other school of thought is more impressed by the consequences of a too rigid severity: people who are at least nominal Catholics will be forced into open apostasy, and their families with them, if the priest by refusing his ministrations breaks the thin cord which is still binding them to the Church; rather than snap it one must stretch theological and canonical principles to their utmost limit.

The bishops have succeeded in pointing out a *via media* between these two extremes, and where none is possible they have inclined rather to indulgence than severity, though in every instance their solutions are supported by theological and canonical authorities. Many of the cases discussed, such as the abuse of private baptism (*ondolement*) or the delaying of first communion years beyond the canonical age, are problems with which we in this country are happily unfamiliar. Others differ only in extent and degree from the situations confronting us, and it is worth while weighing the solutions of one or two of them a little more carefully.

There is, in the first place, the "paschatin", the person who comes to confession and receives Holy Communion only at Easter. This "hardy annual", who is well within the law in declining to receive the sacraments more often, usually presents a problem concerning his dispositions for receiving a valid absolution, since he is one of those who habitually miss Sunday Mass throughout the year and has no intention of changing this practice. The episcopal direction is that he may be absolved if the confessor judges that he is not guilty of formal mortal sin in habitually missing Mass, owing to his conscience being invincibly erroneous on this point; he must be warned of the obligation and absolution should be refused only when, after repeated

warnings, the penitent has failed to observe the law even to a small extent. This direction is probably the most important of them all and readers may like to have the actual text:¹

Ceux qui ne se confessent qu'à Pâques.—L'absolution peut être accordée à un "paschatin" qui omet habituellement la Messe du dimanche, s'il apparaît au confesseur que son pénitent, faute d'une conscience suffisante de l'obligation, n'a pas commis de péché formel grave. Mais le confesseur doit profiter de la monition pour essayer d'éclairer et de former la conscience de cet habituel. Il aurait tort de s'en abstenir sous prétexte de ne pas troubler sa bonne foi. Il ne peut refuser l'absolution à un "paschatin" que si, après l'avoir instruit avec une grande patience et donc à plusieurs reprises, il ne peut découvrir en lui aucun signe de contrition et aucun effort pour s'améliorer même partiellement. (On peut être plus sévère dans un milieu où s'est conservée l'assistance à la Messe du dimanche. On ne saurait trop rappeler aux pénitents l'obligation d'assister à la Messe du dimanche.)

Persons who have remarried after a civil divorce are not excommunicated: they remain members of the Church and subject to its laws. They may not, indeed, receive Holy Communion, since they are in the condition of "public sinners", but the clergy should treat them with the greatest charity and encourage them to be present at Mass on Sundays and to have their children baptized and given a Christian education. (One hears occasionally in this country of priests who refuse to baptize the children of Catholic parents who are not validly married, a practice which is directly against the common law.) To receive the sacraments these persons must live in chastity, all scandal being removed, which is a matter for the decision of the local Ordinary.²

These two examples suffice to illustrate the general nature of the episcopal directions. In some respects the clergy would, no doubt, have welcomed a fuller and more detailed instruction, notably on the confessor's duty towards those married people who habitually practise contraception. Also, in one or two cases, the statements are a little puzzling and one would

¹ P. 51.

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² P. 69.

welcome further elucidation. Thus, it is stated that the absence of faith in the adult recipient renders a reception of the Holy Eucharist invalid,¹ whereas the common teaching restricts invalidity to Penance, since the acts of the penitent are the matter. Also, the instruction permits marriage to the unconfirmed only if it is impossible to receive confirmation in time, whereas canon 1021 merely requires the parties to receive this sacrament before marriage "*si id possint sine gravi incommodo*". These are small points which, no doubt, can be satisfactorily explained.

The great value of the directions is in the approbation by the whole French episcopate of this text submitted to them by Mgr Guerry, the coadjutor Archbishop of Cambrai, and they cannot fail to be of the utmost utility to the clergy. A further document is promised on liturgical worship which will be equally valuable.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

THE VIRGINITY OF OUR LADY

The correspondence in *THE CLERGY REVIEW* under the heading "Representations of the Nativity" (1951, xxxv, p. 429) appears to assume that the virginity of our Lady necessarily implies her painless child-bearing. Is this so? (H.)

REPLY

Constitution of Paul IV (A.D. 1555): . . . omnes et singulos qui hactenus asseruerunt, dogmatizerunt vel crediderunt . . . Beatissimam Virginem Mariam non esse veram Dei matrem, nec perstissemper in virginitatis integritate, ante partum scilicet, in partu et perpetuo post partum, ex parte omnipotentis Dei Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti apostolica auctoritate requirimus et monemus etc.²

¹ P. 44.

² Denzinger 993.

The teaching of this Constitution, that our Lady's perpetual virginity includes virginity "in partu" as well as "ante et post partum", is the unanimous teaching of all the Fathers of East and West, at least from the third century, and of all the theologians. As instances of patristic teaching may be quoted:

St Ambrose (commenting on Ezechiel xlv, 1 seq.): quae est haec porta nisi Maria, ideo clausa quia virgo? Porta igitur Maria, per quam Christus intravit in hunc mundum, quando virginali fusus est partu et genitalia virginitatis claustra non solvit.¹

St. Augustine: Istum diem nobis non sol iste visibilis, sed creator ipsius invisibilis consecravit, quando eum pro nobis visibilem factum . . . visceribus fecundis et genitalibus integris virgo mater effudit. Concipiens virgo, pariens virgo, virgo gravida, virgo feta, virgo perpetus.²

St Leo the Great: Nova nativitate genitus est, conceptus a virgine, natus ex virgine, sine paternae carnis concupiscentia, sine maternae integritatis iniuria . . . divina potestate subnixum est, quod virgo conceperit, quod virgo pepererit, et virgo permanserit.³

St Ephraem: Haec virgo facta est mater, servata virginitate et sigillis non solutis.⁴

St John Damascene: nascendo (Christus) virginitatis illius praeservavit immunem . . . Habuit enim potestatem et per portam transire et tamen eius sigilla non laedere.⁵

Against the moral unanimity of the Fathers the teaching of Tertullian that our Lady was a virgin "quantum a viro, non autem quanto a partu"⁶ and the apparent hesitation of Origen carry no weight. The official doctrine of the patristic age is enshrined in the canon of the Lateran Council, held under Martin I, A.D. 649: Si quis secundum sanctos Patres non confitetur proprie et secundum veritatem Dei genitricem sanctam semperque Virginem et immaculatam Mariam . . . absque semine concepisse ex Spiritu Sancto, et incorruptibiliter eam genuisse . . . condemnatus sit".⁷ The canons of this Council were incorporated in the official letter sent by Pope Agatho to

¹ *De Instit. Virginis*, c. viii, n. 52.

² *In Nativitate Domini*, Sermo II.

³ *De Fide Orthodoxa*, IV, c. 14.

⁴ Denzinger 256.

⁵ Sermo 186, 1, 1 in *Natali Domini*.

⁶ *Hymns on the Blessed Mary*, xviii, 12.

⁷ *De carne Christi*, c. 23.

the Emperors on the occasion of the Sixth Ecumenical Council, III Constantinople (A.D. 680-1).

The mode of Christ's birth was therefore miraculous. It was effected "miraculose per virtutem divinam",¹ says St Thomas. The miraculous character of the birth, which the Fathers compare to our Lord's resurrection through the closed tomb and His passing through the closed door of the upper room, necessarily implies that Mary's child-bearing was painless.

J. C.

EXCOMMUNICATION—GRAVE FEAR

The newly promulgated l.s. excommunication affecting episcopal consecration without the papal mandate is incurred even though the act is performed under the influence of grave fear. Are we to conclude that grave fear does excuse one from incurring other censures, even when the action is gravely sinful? (D.)

REPLY

Canon 2229, §3: Si lex illa verba non habeat: 2. Ebrietas, omissio debitae diligentiae, mentis debilitas, impetus passionis, si, non obstante imputabilitatis deminutione, actio sit adhuc graviter culpabilis, a poenis latae sententiae non excusant. 3. Metus gravis, si delictum vergat in contemptum fidei aut ecclesiasticae auctoritatis vel in publicum animarum damnum, a poenis latae sententiae nullatenus eximit.

Code Commission, 30 December, 1937; *THE CLERGY REVIEW*, 1938, XIV, p. 452: An metus gravis a poenis latae sententiae eximit si delictum, quamvis intrinsece malum et graviter culpabile, non vergat in contemptum fidei aut ecclesiasticae auctoritatis vel in publicum animarum damnum ad normam canonis 2229, §3.3? *Resp.* Affirmative.

S. Off., 9 April, 1951; *THE CLERGY REVIEW*, 1951, XXXV, p. 413: Episcopus, cuiusvis ritus vel dignitatis, aliquem, neque ab Apostolica Sede nominatum neque ab Eadem expresse confirmatum, consecrans in Episcopum, et qui consecrationem

¹ *Summa Theologica*, III, q. 28, a. 2, ad 3.

recipit, etsi metu gravi coacti (c. 2229, §3.3) incurrunt *ipso facto* in excommunicationem Apostolicae Sedi specialissimo reservatam.

The law of canon 953, reserving episcopal consecration to the Roman Pontiff and forbidding it without a papal mandate, is strengthened in the Code by the suspension of canon 2370, a vindictive penalty not a censure. The threat of schism in certain countries of middle Europe has prompted the Holy See to add to this penalty the censure of excommunication, reserved *specialissimo modo*, promulgated 9 April, 1951, and grave fear is declared not to be an excuse from incurring the censure.

The declaration about grave fear adds nothing, in fact, to the existing law of canon 2229, §3.3, since the consecration of ecclesiastics chosen for their compliance by a communist State, and with complete disregard of the Holy See, is obviously an act adverse to the Catholic faith, ecclesiastical authority and the good of souls. It must be noted that the portion of this canon which concerns the present question applies only to laws which lack words such as *praesumpserit*, *studiose*, *consulto*, and they are lacking in canon 2370 which is now strengthened by the new excommunication.

There is reason in the above question since fear appears to come within the definition of passion in n. 2 and therefore it would seem that n. 3 is redundant. This difficulty is solved by the Code Commission reply, 30 December, 1937, which by implication decides that, for canonical purposes at any rate, and in the matter of incurring censures, fear is something distinct from passion in general.

The answer to the question is in the Code Commission's reply, but we are far from holding that everything in canon 2229 is now clear as daylight. It is a most difficult canon to interpret and must be studied in conjunction with canon 2205, §3.

VETITUM ECCLESIAE

In what circumstances is the Church accustomed to forbid a marriage which is not forbidden by any of the prohibiting or diriment impediments of the Code? (R.)

REPLY

Canon 1038, §2 : Eidem supremæ auctoritati (ecclesiasticæ) privative ius est alia impedimenta matrimonium impediuntia vel dirimentia pro baptizatis constituendi per modum legis sive universalis sive particularis.

Canon 1039, §1. Ordinarii locorum omnibus in suo territorio vetare possunt matrimonia in casu particulari, sed ad tempus tantum, iusta de causa eaque perdurante.

§2. Vetito clausulam irritantem una Sedes Apostolica addere potest.

The power of the Ordinary in canon 1039, §1, could be exercised when there is the suspicion of an impediment, pending its investigation, or the necessity of avoiding grave scandal; the person affected may have recourse to the Holy See. Some hold that the parish priest enjoys a similar power,¹ but a more correct estimate is that he cannot constitute an impediment in the strict sense: what he can do is to refuse to assist at a marriage because of some possible infringement of the common law and pending a clarification of the issue.

The commonest use of the *vetitum* on the part of the Holy See is when a marriage is declared invalid owing to the impediment of impotence, or when it is dissolved by the Holy See *ratum non consummatum*; it is then customary for the judicial decision, for example, of the Rota, to contain a phrase such as "vetito tamen viro transitu ad alias nuptias inconsulta Sancta Sede." The prohibition is also found attached to judgements where a nullity decision has been obtained notwithstanding the fact that the party is the cause of the nullity: "vetito mulieri transitu ad alias nuptias, donec sub fide iurisiurandi coram Ordinario loci promiserit se in novo matrimonio contrahendo non amplius exclusuram esse bonum prolis seu generationem filiorum."

The prohibition, whether of the Holy See or of local Ordinaries, binds *sub gravi*. It is rare, however, for this *vetitum* to have the invalidating effect mentioned in canon 1039, §2.

The right of attaching this prohibition, as an administrative

¹ Heylen, *De Matrimonio*, p. 467.

act, to a judicial decision is vindicated in *Decisio LVIII coram Quatttrocolo*, of Vol. XXXII of the Rotal decisions for the year 1940. It is by way of a safeguard to protect the rights of some future partner of the person under the *vetitum*, and it is withdrawn after suitable enquiry.¹

DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE "IN FAVOREM FIDEI"

I have to prepare for a parishioner the evidence of a *prima facie* case for a papal dissolution of a marriage validly contracted and consummated between a baptized and a non-baptized person. Could I have an indication of what is required and especially the requirements of the proof that one party is not baptized? (S.)

REPLY

i. The Holy See possesses the power of dissolving a marriage validly contracted between a baptized person and one not baptized, provided the requisite conditions for the exercise of this power are present; two are absolutely essential: (a) the non-baptism of one party, during the period at least of conjugal life; (b) if the formerly unbaptized party is baptized at the time of the petition, it will be necessary to establish that marriage relations did not occur since baptism—otherwise the union is *ratum et consummatum* and is indissoluble except by death. In practice it is further required: (c) that the marriage, whose dissolution is being sought, has become wrecked beyond repair, which usually happens owing to a civil divorce; and (d) that the granting of the dissolution will not give rise to scandal.

ii. Often popularly confused with it, this method of dissolution is wholly distinct from the Pauline Privilege, though the papal prerogative is the best explanation of the way the Pauline Privilege has been widely interpreted in past centuries. The first express use of the papal power in recent times as something wholly distinct from the Pauline Privilege was a dis-

¹ Cf. *Monitor Ecclesiasticus*, 1950, p. 313.

solution granted by Pius XI, 5 November, 1925,¹ and it has often been used since. It was referred to by the Pope in his Rotal address, 3 October, 1941: "... other marriages, though intrinsically indissoluble, do not possess an absolute extrinsic indissolubility, but given certain necessary prerequisites can (in cases which are of course relatively rare), even outside the case of the Pauline Privilege, be dissolved by the Roman Pontiff in virtue of his ministerial power."² It was in some dispute whether this power would ever be used to dissolve a marriage contracted with a dispensation from the impediment of difference of worship. Cardinal Gasparri affirmed, in the first Latin edition of his Catechism, that it could be used, and one instance of it, in the American diocese of Monterey-Fresno, 18 July, 1947, though admittedly in very unusual circumstances, is given by Bouscaren.³

iii. No instructions have been published on the details of the preliminary process, and the writers are not informative; Doheny's extensive volumes contain only six pages and many commentators have nothing at all on the subject. Some *Normae* for the use of the diocesan curia have been prepared by the Holy Office.

iv. As regards the proof of non-baptism, corroboration of the party's sworn declaration that he has not been baptized may be forthcoming: from the statements of relatives to that effect; from the tenets of the religious sect to which the party belongs; or from a search of the baptismal registers of his place of origin. There exists, however, a presumption, in the case of one born of Catholic parents or of non-Catholics who observe in principle and in practice the law of infant baptism, that it was administered notwithstanding the lack of any written record. Except in the case of a pagan, a Jew or a Mahomedan, proof of non-baptism is difficult, and one must also bear in mind the recent declaration of the Holy Office, 28 December, 1949, that doubtful baptisms in Protestant sects are to be presumed valid in relation to all marriage causes which turn upon the fact of baptism.⁴

¹ Cf. THE CLERGY REVIEW, 1932, IV, p. 503.

² Op. cit. 1942, XXII, p. 86.

³ *Digest*, Supplement, 1948, p. 178.

⁴ THE CLERGY REVIEW, 1950, XXXIII, p. 198.

SEDILIA

In a church served by one priest the sanctuary has an armchair of suitable design, obtained from a church furnisher, instead of the bench—*scamnum*—which is usually of sufficient length to accommodate three sacred ministers. Since a solemn Mass never takes place in this church, is the armchair permitted? (T.)

REPLY

Caerem. Epp., I, xii, 22: . . . satis erit scamnum oblongum, coopertum aliqua tapete, aut panno, aptari a latere Epistolae, in quo sedeat Sacerdos celebrans cum Diacono et Subdiacono.

S.R.C., 17 September, 1822, n. 2621.6: An tolerandus sit abusus, qui nimium invaluit, adhibendi in Missis solemnibus pro Celebrante, loco scamni cooperti tapete, Sedem cameralem serico damasceno ornatam, et pro ministris similia scabella; vel potius reprobandus atque damnandus? *Resp.* Negative ad primam partem; affirmative ad secundam.

Gardellini in *D.A.*, IV, p. 243, commenting on n. 2621: *Caeremoniale* (I, ix, 1) nec formam praescribit, nec ornatum, quae duo accidentaliter sunt et varia esse possunt iuxta diversas Ecclesiarum consuetudines. Scamni nomen genericum est, et aequae potest intelligi tam de scabello oblongo, quam de lignea pariter oblonga sede cum suo postergali; excludit vero sedes camerales. Qui tamen sit *Caeremonialis* sensus, num velit scamnum cum vel sine postergali, incertum est.

i. The many instructions on the shape of the ministers' bench are concerned primarily with that used by the sacred ministers, either at episcopal functions or at a solemn Mass,¹ and do not directly deal with an article designed for the celebrant alone. The bishop's chair or *cathedra* is the only one of this kind provided for in the rubrics, and restrictions on the shape, size and adornment of the seats provided for lesser ministers are made, no doubt, with a view to preventing anything resembling an episcopal throne. The seating provided for three ministers must

¹ E.g. N.2135.3; 3104.4; 3804.11.

not be three chairs, but a simple bench, without arm rests; a low back rest is permissible, and there is no reason why the article should not be built into the wall of the epistle side of the sanctuary.

ii. Adapting these rules to the accommodation of one minister in a small sanctuary, a simple stool suffices, resembling those used at the episcopal throne for assisting ministers. It may have a back rest but it seems to us that arm rests are not correct, *pace* the church furnishers. Provided, however, it is of modest design and proportions, and has no resemblance to a domestic arm-chair, one could regard the provision of arm rests as only a slight and negligible deviation from the rule.

GENUFLEXIONS

Should the faithful, when taking no part in some function at the altar, genuflect to the cross at the High Altar if the Blessed Sacrament is not there reserved? Also is it necessary for the sacristan, attending to the candles during Exposition, to genuflect on both knees whenever he crosses the middle of the altar? (X.)

REPLY

S.R.C., 30 August, 1982, n. 3792.11: Quum a Caere-
moniali Episcoporum praescribatur ut omnes, exceptis Can-
onicis Ecclesiae Cathedralis, unicum genu flectant Cruci
Altaris maioris, quaestio exorta est num haec genuflexio
facienda sit etiam in aliis ecclesiis seu cappellis publicis, ubi in
Altari maiori haud asservatur SS. Eucharistiae Sacramentum?
Resp. Affirmative; sed in actu functionis tantum.

The act of bending the knee occurs as an expression of penance, or of supplication, or as a mark of honour to superiors, but most of all as an act of adoration, and it is under this aspect that the two questions arise. In no case can anything easily be discerned in the action as of its nature penitential or sup-
plicating or worshipful; hence one meets the extremes of St Patrick, for example, who is said to have repeated genuflections

a hundred times daily, and the sect of Agonizantes, who are said to have been opposed to genuflections at all times.¹

The correct practice is fixed by rubrical law during ceremonies. For private visits to altars or churches genuflection on one knee is the rule when the Blessed Sacrament is reserved but not exposed; otherwise, to the Crucifix of the High Altar one should incline the head when passing, except during the time between its uncovering on Good Friday and None of Holy Saturday, when genuflection is directed by S.R.C., n. 3049.5.

If the Blessed Sacrament is exposed, everyone should genuflect on both knees when arriving and departing. Relying on the rule of n. 2682.49, which directs a genuflection on both knees when arriving or departing from the altar of exposition on occasions when Mass is there celebrated, but on one knee only throughout the Mass, many rightly deduce that the sacristan must similarly genuflect on both knees when arriving and departing, but a genuflection on one knee suffices when passing before the Blessed Sacrament in the course of his work at the altar.²

E. J. M.

ROMAN DOCUMENTS

MARRIAGE AND CHILDBIRTH*

(ADDRESS OF POPE PIUS XII TO THE ITALIAN CATHOLIC UNION OF MIDWIVES, 29 OCTOBER, 1951. *Osservatore Romano*, 29-30 October, 1951.)

Watchful guardians over that dark and silent cradle where God infuses an immortal soul into the germ the parents have provided, ready to tend the mother, ready to assure a safe and happy birth to the child she bears within her—what a noble, what a glorious task is yours!

¹ *Ephemerides Liturgicae*, 1925, p. 304; *Dict. Archéol.*, VI, col. 1020.

² D. G. Murphy, *The Sacristan's Manual*, p. 96.

* Translated from the Italian original by G. D. S.

When one thinks of the marvellous co-operation between parents, nature, and God, which gives to the light a new human being made in the Creator's image and likeness,¹ it is impossible not to appreciate the valuable contribution you make to this work. "Into this womb you came," said the heroic mother of the Machabees to her children, "I know not how. Not I quickened, not I the breath of God gave you, nor fashioned the bodies of you one by one. Man's birth, and the origin of all things, he devised who is the whole world's Maker."²

And therefore those who assist at this cradle of the beginning of human life, who in one way or another exert their activity upon it, must be acquainted with the order that the Creator requires to be maintained in it and with the laws that govern it. For these laws are not merely physical and biological, which even irrational beings and blind forces necessarily obey, but laws whose fulfilment and effects are entrusted to the voluntary and free co-operation of human beings.

The order to be observed here has been established by God's sovereign intelligence and is directed to His creative purpose; it concerns the external activity of human beings and the internal adherence of their freewill; it determines what they are bound to do and what it is their duty to avoid. Nature puts at man's disposal the whole chain of causes which will result in the appearance of a new human life; it is for him to release this vital force and it is for nature to develop its course and bring it to completion. When once man has done his part and set in motion the marvellous process which will produce a new life it is his bounden duty to let it take its course. He must not arrest it or frustrate its natural development.

Nature's part and man's part are thus clearly determined. Your professional training and experience enable you to know the action of nature and the action of man, as well as the principles and laws to which they are both subject; your conscience, enlightened by reason and faith and guided by the divinely established Authority, teaches you within what limits an action is permissible and where it is strictly forbidden.

In the light of these principles We propose now to set before you some considerations regarding the *apostolate* which your profession entails. For every profession that is in accordance with God's will implies a *mission*, the mission of carrying into effect the thoughts and purposes of the Creator within the sphere proper to that profession,

¹ Cf. Gen. i, 26-7.

² 2 Mach. vii, 22.

and of helping human beings to understand the justice and holiness of the divine plan and the benefits which they themselves derive from its fulfilment.

I

Personal Influence

Why do people request your services? Because they are convinced that you know your business; that you know what mother and child stand in need of, to what dangers both are exposed, and how these dangers can be avoided or overcome. You are expected to give advice and help, not in an unlimited sense, but within the bounds of human knowledge and power and in proportion to the progress and the present state of science and practice in your specialized field.

If all this is expected of you it is because confidence is reposed in you, and this confidence is above all something personal. It must be inspired by your personality. And that such confidence shall not be misplaced is not only your own earnest desire, it is required by your office and your profession; it is therefore your duty in conscience. And for this reason you are bound to strive after the highest possible skill in your work.

But this professional skill is demanded also by your apostolate and is indeed a form of it. What conviction would your words carry on any moral and religious questions connected with your office if you showed yourselves lacking in technical knowledge? If on the contrary you can command respect by reason of your professional ability, any intervention of yours in the moral and religious sphere will be far more effective. Impressed by your worth, your clients will also become firmly convinced that a Christianity based on conviction and loyally practised, far from being an obstacle to your professional standing, guarantees and assures it. They will see clearly that in your work you are aware of your responsibility before God; that it is in your faith in God that you find the most powerful motive for giving the most devoted assistance where the need is greatest; that in your firm religious convictions lies the secret of that resolution with which you are able to answer "No" unequivocally and fearlessly, whenever and by whomsoever demands are made on you that are contrary to reason and to moral principles.

Esteemed no less for your personal character than for your knowledge and experience, you will find that mother and child are

confidently entrusted to your care and, perhaps all unconsciously and often without a word uttered, you will be exercising a profound and effective apostolate of practical Christianity. However high the authority attaching to strictly professional competence, it is above all by true humanity and true Christianity that human beings influence one another.

II

The Value and Sacredness of Human Life

Of the value and inviolability of human life the modern world needs urgently to be convinced, and to be convinced by the three-fold testimony of mind, heart, and facts. This testimony your profession enables you, and obliges you, to give. Sometimes it may be by a simple word spoken tactfully and in due season to the mother or the father; more often it will be your behaviour and conscientious way of acting that exerts a discreet and silent influence. You are in a special position to know and appreciate the nature of human life, its value in the eyes of reason, your moral conscience, civil society, the Church and, above all, in the eyes of God. God has made everything else on earth for the sake of man; and man himself, so far as his being and essence are concerned, has been created for God and not for any creature, although, in his action, he has obligations also towards the community.

Now the child, even the unborn child, is a human being, a human being in the same degree and by the same title as is its mother. Moreover, every human being, even the child in its mother's womb, receives its right to life *directly* from God, not from its parents, nor from any human society or authority. Therefore there is no man, no human authority, no science, no "indication", whether medical, eugenical, social, economic or moral, that can show or give a valid juridical title for a deliberate and *direct* disposing of an innocent human life, that is to say, for an action which aims at its destruction, whether such destruction be intended as an end or as a means towards some other end which may itself be in no way illicit. So, for example, to save the life of the mother is a most noble end, but the direct killing of the child as a means to that end is not lawful. The direct destruction of the so-called "valueless life", whether born or unborn, which was practised a few years ago in numerous instances, can in no way be justified. And therefore when

this practice began the Church formally declared that it is contrary to the natural law and to the positive law of God, and consequently illicit—even under instruction from the public authority—to kill those who, although innocent, are nevertheless by reason of some physical or psychical taint useless to the nation and even become a burden on the community.¹ The life of an innocent human being is inviolable, and any direct assault or attack on it violates one of those fundamental laws without which it is impossible for human beings to live safely in society. We have no need to teach you the particular significance of this fundamental law and its bearing upon your profession. But do not forget it: above any human law, above any "indication" whatsoever, there stands the indefectible law of God.

Your apostolate makes it your duty to communicate to others the knowledge of human life, the value and respect for it, which are the fruit of your Christian conviction; it will be for you, if need be, to stand up boldly in its defence and, when necessary and possible, to protect the defenceless and as yet hidden life of the child, appealing to the divine commandment: "Thou shalt not kill."² This defensive function may at times appear the most necessary and most pressing part of your mission; but it is by no means the most sublime or the most important. Your highest function is not purely negative, it is above all constructive and aims at promoting, building, strengthening.

Inspire the mind and heart of mother and father with a longing for their child, so that, from the first faint cry it utters, it will be assured of their joyous and loving welcome. The child formed in the mother's womb is a gift of God³ and He entrusts it to the parents' care. With what enchanting delicacy do the Scriptures invite us to contemplate the group of sons surrounding their father's table! They are the reward of the just, while sterility, often, is the punishment of the sinner. Hear the divine words expressed in the unsurpassable poetry of the psalmist: "Thy wife shall be fruitful as a vine, in the heart of thy home, the children round thy table sturdy as olive branches. Let a man serve the Lord, such is the blessing that awaits him"⁴—while of the wicked man it is written: "A speedy end to his race, oblivion for his name before a generation passes."⁵

As soon as the child is born, hasten to place it in the arms of the father, as the ancient Romans used to do. With them the action was merely an acknowledgement of paternity and an assertion of the

¹ Decree of the Holy Office, 2 Dec., 1940; *A.A.S.*, 1940, pp. 553-4; *THE CLERGY REVIEW*, 1941, XXI, pp. 55-6.

² *Exod.* xx, 13.

⁴ *Ps.* 128, 3-4.

³ *Ps.* 127, 3.

⁵ *Ps.* 109, 13.

authority that derives from it; but here the symbolism is far more sublime: it is an act of homage and thankfulness to the Creator, an invocation of the divine blessing, a promise to fulfil with whole-hearted love the duty that God has entrusted to him. If the Lord has praise and reward for the faithful servant who makes five talents yield a profit,¹ what praise, what reward, will he not have in store for the father who has preserved and fostered for Him the human life placed in his charge—something more precious than all the gold and silver in the world?

But it is to the mother especially that your apostolate is directed. Doubtless the voice of nature speaks in her and puts in her heart the longing for a child, inspires her with courage and the loving resolve to care for it; yet, to overcome the manifold fears that timidity suggests, the voice of nature needs to be strengthened, it needs to speak with a supernatural accent. It is for you, less by words than by your whole attitude and conduct, to make the young mother understand what a great and marvellous thing is the life that is stirring, growing, living in her bosom, the life that is born of her, that she carries in her arms and feeds at her breast; to make her see with her eyes and understand with her heart what a signal proof of God's love this is for her and for her child. The Scriptures re-echo for you the petitions and entreaties, and then the hymns of happy thanksgiving, uttered by so many mothers whose tearful prayers for the grace of motherhood have at last been heard. And even the pains which, since original sin, the mother must suffer in order to bring her child to the light of day only tighten the bonds that unite them; she loves her child the more for its having cost her so much. He who moulded the mother's heart has expressed this truth in simple and moving words: "A woman in childbirth feels distress, because now her time has come; but when she has borne her child, she does not remember the distress any longer, so glad is she that a man has been born into the world."² Moreover the Holy Spirit, speaking by the Apostle Paul, shows us the greatness and the joy of motherhood: God gives the child to the mother, but in the very act of giving it He enables her to lend her effective co-operation in the unfolding of the flower whose seed He has placed in her womb, and this co-operation becomes for her a way of reaching her eternal salvation: "Woman will find her salvation in child-bearing."³

Reason and faith thus combine harmoniously to assure you that you are fully in the right and can proceed with serene confidence in your apostolate of esteem and love for the new life. If you are

¹ Matt. xxv, 21.

² John xvi, 21.

³ 1 Tim. ii, 15.

successful in your apostolate at the cradle of the new-born child you will not find great difficulty in ensuring the fulfilment of any instructions which your professional conscience, in accordance with the law of God and the law of nature, may dictate for the benefit of both mother and child.

You need no proof, your experience will have taught you, how necessary today is this apostolate of esteem and love for the new life. In only too many cases the merest mention of children as a "blessing" is enough to provoke contradiction or even derision. Far more often children are thought and spoken of as a "burden". How contrary is this mentality to God's thought and to the language of Scripture, and even to sound reason and the sentiment of nature itself! There may indeed be conditions and circumstances in which parents, without breaking God's law, can avoid the "blessing" of children; but these cases of hard necessity cannot justify the perversion of ideas, the reversal of values, contempt for the mother who has had the honourable courage to give life.

All that We have said about the protection and care of natural life is with even greater reason true of the supernatural life, which the new-born child receives with baptism. In the present dispensation there is no other means of communicating this life to the child, who has not yet the use of reason. And yet the state of grace in the moment of death is absolutely necessary for salvation: without it supernatural happiness, the beatific vision of God, cannot be attained. In an adult an act of love may suffice to obtain him sanctifying grace and so supply the lack of baptism; to the child still unborn, or newly born, this way is not open. If therefore we remember that charity towards our neighbour obliges us to assist him in case of necessity; that this obligation is the graver and the more urgent according to the greatness of the good to be procured or the evil to be avoided, and according to the inability of the needy one to help himself; then it is easy to understand the importance of providing for the baptism of a child, deprived of the use of reason, and in grave danger or even certainty of death. Admittedly this duty rests primarily upon the parents; but in cases of urgency, when there is no time to be lost and a priest cannot be called, then the sublime duty of conferring baptism is yours. Do not fail, then, to render this service and to exercise this active apostolate of your profession. May you find comfort and encouragement in the words of Jesus: "Blessed are the merciful; they shall obtain mercy."¹ And what greater mercy, what nobler mercy, can there be than to ensure

¹ Matt. v, 7.

for the soul of the child—between the threshold of the life upon which it has hardly entered, and the threshold of death which it is preparing to cross—its entry into a glorious and happy eternity!

III

The Ready Acceptance of Motherhood

No sooner had she received the message of the Angel than our Blessed Lady answered: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word."¹ Here was a "fiat", here was a wholehearted "Yes" in answer to the vocation to motherhood—virginal motherhood, indeed, and incomparably higher than any other; yet real motherhood, in the true and proper sense of the word.² And this is why the faithful in reciting the *Angelus*, when they have recorded Mary's acceptance, say immediately afterwards: "And the Word was made flesh."³

It is one of the fundamental requirements of the true moral order that to the use of conjugal rights there should correspond a sincere internal acceptance of the office and duties of motherhood. On this condition the wife is walking in the path traced out by the Creator towards the end He has assigned to His creature, making her, by the exercise of this function, sharer of His goodness, His wisdom and His omnipotence, according to the announcement of the Angel: "Thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bear (a child)."⁴

Such being the biological foundation of your professional work, the pressing object of your apostolate will be to awaken and maintain an understanding and a love of motherhood.

When both parties to the marriage duly esteem and appreciate the honour of raising up a new life and look forward with a holy impatience to see it blossom forth, then your task is easy; you have only to encourage this sentiment in them; the readiness to welcome and foster that nascent life follows of itself. But unfortunately it is not always so: often the baby is not wanted; worse, it is feared. In such conditions how can there be a ready acceptance of duty? Here is room for your active and efficacious apostolate. Negatively, you must refuse any co-operation that is immoral; then, positively, you will use all your efforts tactfully to dissipate preconceived ideas, apprehensions and timorous pretexts of various kinds, also, as far as

¹ Luke i, 38.

² John i, 14.

³ Cf. Gal. iv, 4.

⁴ Cf. Luke i, 31.

possible, to remove any external obstacles that may make the acceptance of motherhood a hardship. If your advice and help are sought only to facilitate the procreation of a new life, to protect and help it towards its full development, then you can unconditionally lend your co-operation. But in how many other cases is your assistance asked in order to prevent the procreation and maintenance of this new life, without any regard to the precepts of the moral order? To yield to such requests would be to dishonour your knowledge and skill by becoming partners in an immoral act; it would be a perversion of your apostolate, which here calls for a calm but categorical "No", which refuses to transgress God's law and the dictate of conscience. And therefore your profession obliges you to have a clear knowledge of that divine law, that you may be able to ensure its observance, without falling short of its demands and without going beyond them.

Our predecessor Pope Pius XI, in his encyclical *Casti connubii* of 30 December, 1930, once again solemnly proclaimed the fundamental law that governs the conjugal act and conjugal relations: that any attempt made by the parties in the performance of the conjugal act or in the development of its natural consequences, designed to deprive it of its inherent power and to prevent the procreation of a new life, is immoral; and that no "indication" or necessity can change an intrinsically immoral act into one that is moral and allowable.¹

This prescription is in full force now as it was before, and so it will be tomorrow and for ever, because it is not a mere human enactment but the expression of a natural and divine law.

Let Our words be a sure norm for all the cases in which your profession and your apostolate require you to give a clear and firm decision.

Far worse than the mere failure to be ready in the service of life would be an attack delivered by man, not upon a single act, but upon the organism itself in order, by sterilizing the faculty, to deprive it of the power to procreate new life. Here too you have a clear instruction in the teaching of the Church to guide you in your internal and external conduct. Direct sterilization—that is, sterilization which aims at rendering procreation impossible, whether this be intended as a means or as an end—is a grave violation of the moral law and therefore illicit. Even the public Authority, whatever "indication" it may invoke, has no right to permit it and still less to enjoin it and cause it to be carried out to the detriment of the

¹ Cf. A.A.S., 1931, pp. 559 ff.; C.T.S. (DO 113), *Christian Marriage*, par. 56.

innocent. This principle had already been laid down by Pope Pius XI in the encyclical mentioned above.¹ When, therefore, ten years ago sterilization came to be increasingly practised, the Holy See found it necessary to declare expressly and publicly that direct sterilization, whether permanent or temporary, whether of man or of woman, is illicit by virtue of the natural law, from which, as you know, the Church herself has no power to dispense.²

In your apostolate, therefore, so far as in you lies, set your face against these perversions and refuse them your co-operation.

The further serious problem presents itself today whether and how far the obligation of being ready in the service of motherhood is consistent with the increasingly common use of the naturally sterile periods (the so-called agenetic periods in the woman)—which would seem to be a clear repudiation of it.

It is rightly expected of you that you should be well informed on the medical side of this theory and on the progress that may be foreseen in this department of knowledge; also that your advice and assistance should be based not on mere popular publications, but on the objective findings of science and the judgement of conscientious specialists in medicine and biology. It is not the priest's duty, it is yours, to instruct married people on the biological and technical aspects of the theory, without letting yourselves indulge in a propaganda which has neither justice nor decency to recommend it; and such instruction may be conveyed either in private consultation or by means of serious books on the subject. But here too your apostolate requires you, as women and as Christians, to know and uphold the moral standards which govern the application of the theory. And here the Church is the competent guide.

In the first place two suppositions are possible. It may be that the application of the theory means only that married people are allowed to use their conjugal rights also during the naturally sterile periods. Here no objection can be raised; by their action they are not obstructing or prejudicing in any way the consummation of the natural act and its further natural consequences. It is precisely in this respect that the present application of the theory differs essentially from the abuse mentioned above, which consists in the perversion of the act itself. But it may be that the application goes further, and allows the conjugal act *exclusively* during those periods. On this supposition the conduct of the parties needs to be examined more closely.

¹ *A.A.S.*, 1931, pp. 564-5; *Christian Marriage*, par. 67-9.

² Decree of the Holy Office, 22 Feb., 1940; *A.A.S.*, 1940, p. 73; *THE CLERGY REVIEW*, 1940, XVIII, p. 556.

Again two hypotheses present themselves. It may be that at least one of the parties in contracting matrimony had the intention to restrict the matrimonial *right*, and not only its *use*, to the periods of sterility; with the result that the other party would not have even the right to request intercourse at other times. In such a case there would be an essential defect in the matrimonial consent, involving the invalidity of the marriage itself, since the right that springs from the matrimonial contract is a permanent and uninterrupted right, belonging to each party in respect of the other.

But it may be that this limitation of intercourse to the periods of natural sterility does not relate to the right itself, but only to the use of the right. If this is so, the validity of the marriage is beyond question. But how far is such conduct of the parties morally permissible? The answer will depend on the motives on which their intention constantly to observe the sterile periods is based. Are these motives from a moral point of view sufficient and secure? The mere fact that the parties are not offending against the nature of the act, and that they are also prepared to accept and rear any offspring which may be born in spite of their precautions, would not alone suffice to guarantee the rightness of their intention and the unimpeachable morality of their motives.

The reason is that matrimony obliges to a state of life which, while carrying with it certain rights, also imposes the fulfilment of a positive work connected with that state of life. In this case we can apply the general principle that a positive contribution may be withheld if serious reasons, independent of the good will of the persons obliged to make it, show that such contribution is inopportune, or prove that the claimant—in this case the human race—cannot in equity require it.

The matrimonial contract, which confers upon the parties the right to satisfy the inclination of nature, constitutes them in a state of life, the state of matrimony. Now upon the parties who make use of this right by the specific act of their state, nature and the Creator impose the function of providing for the conservation of the human race. This is the characteristic contribution from which their state of life derives its peculiar value: *bonum prolis*—the blessing of offspring. The individual and society, the people and the nation, the Church herself, all depend for their existence, in the order God has established, upon fertile marriage. It follows from this that to enter upon the state of matrimony, to make constant use of the faculty proper to it and only in matrimony allowable, and on the other hand consistently and deliberately, and without a serious reason, to shirk the

primary duty it imposes, would be to sin against the very meaning of married life.

From the obligation of making this positive contribution it is possible to be exempt, for a long time and even for the whole duration of married life, if there are serious reasons, such as those often provided in the so-called "indications" of the medical, eugenical, economic and social order. It therefore follows that the observance of the infertile periods may be *licit* from the moral point of view; and under the conditions mentioned it is so in fact. Nevertheless, in the absence—according to a reasonable and equitable judgement—of similar serious reasons, whether personal or circumstantial, the intention of married people to avoid habitually the fecundity of their union, while continuing to give full satisfaction to their sensual desires, can be based only on a false outlook on life or on motives that are foreign to true ethical standards.

But at this point perhaps you may urge that in the exercise of your profession you are sometimes confronted with very difficult cases; cases where it is impossible to enjoin running the risk of motherhood—which indeed must be absolutely avoided—and yet periodic restriction either does not afford sufficient security or else is out of the question for other reasons. How, in such cases, are you to exercise your apostolate in the service of motherhood?

If, in your certain and experienced judgement, the conditions absolutely call for the answer "No", that is to say, for the exclusion of motherhood, it would be against both truth and justice to impose or advise the answer "Yes". The question here is one of concrete facts, a medical, not a theological, question, and it therefore falls within your competence. However, in such cases what the parties are wanting from you is not a medical answer, which is necessarily in the negative, but your approval of a particular technique in their marital relations that guarantees against the risk of maternity. And here again you are required to exercise your apostolate, by leaving no doubt in the minds of your clients that even in these extreme cases any preventive manœuvre, any direct attempt upon the life and development of the germ, is in conscience forbidden and excluded; and that only one way lies open, that of abstinence from any complete actuation of the natural faculty. Here your apostolate obliges you to maintain a clear and certain judgement and a calm resolution.

But it will be objected that such abstinence is impossible, that such heroism is unattainable. You will hear this objection nowadays, you will read it everywhere, and it comes even from those who by

reason of their duty and office ought to be able to judge very differently. And this is the argument they advance: no one is obliged to do the impossible, and it is presumed that no reasonable legislator intends by his law to oblige anyone to do the impossible. But for married people prolonged abstinence is impossible. Therefore they are not obliged to it; and the divine law cannot mean that they are.

In this way from premises partially true a false conclusion is drawn. You have only to reverse the reasoning to see that this is so: God does not oblige anyone to do the impossible. But God does oblige married people to abstinence if their union cannot be consummated according to the laws of nature. Therefore in these cases abstinence is possible. Our argument is confirmed by the doctrine of the Council of Trent which, in its chapter on the obligatory and possible observance of the commandments, teaches, in the words of St Augustine: "God does not command things that are impossible; but when He commands He bids you do what you can, and ask help to do what you cannot, and He himself helps you so that you can."¹

So do not let yourselves be misled in your profession and in your apostolate by all this talk of impossibility; let it not confuse your judgement nor affect your conduct. Never lend yourselves to anything that is against the law of God and your Christian conscience. It is an injustice to the men and women of our time to regard them as incapable of prolonged heroism. Nowadays for many reasons—perhaps under the yoke of hard necessity, sometimes even in the service of an unjust cause—heroism is exercised to a degree and an extent that in times past would have been deemed impossible. Why, then, must this heroism, if the circumstances really call for it, halt at the frontiers of passion and natural inclination? Obviously, anyone who does not want to control himself will not be able to do so; and anyone who thinks he can control himself relying only on his own strength, and without sincerely and perseveringly asking God's help, is doomed to disillusionment.

This is what your apostolate has to do to win over married people to the service of motherhood; and this means, not a blind slavery to natural impulse, but an exercise of conjugal rights and duties which is regulated by the principles of reason and faith.

(To be concluded)

¹ The Council of Trent, sess. 6, cap. 11; Denz., 804; St Augustine, *De natura et gratia*, cap. 43, n. 50; Migne, P.L., 44, 271.

THE NEW HOLY CHILDHOOD DAY

AD EM̃UM P. D. PETRUM TIT. S. CRUCIS IN HIERUSALEM S. R. E. PRESB. CARDINALEM FUMASONI BIONDI, SACRI CONSILII CATHOLICAE PROPAGANDAE FIDEI PRAEFECTUM: DE ASSIGNANDA DIE SINGULIS ANNIS AD OPUS PONTIFICIUM A SANCTA INFANTIA PRECIBUS AC COLLATA STIPE PROMOVENDUM.

PIUS PP. XII

Dilecte Fili Noster, salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem.—Praeses Consilii Pontificio Operi a Sancta Infantia praepositi, officiosis haud ita pridem datis litteris, Nos demisse instanterque rogavit ut, quemadmodum sacris Missionibus provehendis dies quotannis assignatus est, sic dies pariter singulis annis destinaretur ad idem Pontificium Opus, cui ipse digne praeest, admotis ad Deum precibus ac collata stipe promovendum. Nobis placuit admodum susceptum eiusmodi propositum; atque adeo opportunum ducimus hisce obscurare votis atque huic postulationi benignissime concedere. Futurum enim confidimus ut, hac re ubique in usum pro viribus deducta, et Pontificium Opus a Sancta Infantia latius cotidie cognoscatur in debitaque habeatur aestimatione, et ex publice indictis supplicationibus corrogatisque largitionibus haud parum accipiat incrementi. Id quidem summopere Nobis cordi est, cum probe noscamus in regionibus illis in quas Evangelii praecones christianum nomen christianumque cultum inferunt, ingentem haberi infantium puorumque multitudinem, cuius occurrere necessitatibus tam necessarium est, quam quod maxime. Parvulos derelictos caritate summa excipere, eos catholicorum more educare atque enutrire, lustrali aqua rite abluere atque expiare, litteris exercendisque artibus erudire, evangelica virtute conformare, eosdemque cives reddere christiano civilique nomine dignos: haec omnia pro facultate exsequenda Pontificium hoc Opus laudabili consilio laudabilique nisu suscepit. Quamobrem, si haec pariter omnia christifideles omnes precando largiendoque adjuverint, rem profecto fecerint, quam Nos summopere commendamus, et quae eis, ut confidimus, uberrima a Deo conciliabit caelestia munera. Faveas igitur, Dilecte Fili Noster, haec vota Nostra Nostramque voluntatem cum Locorum Ordinariis aptiore, quo putaveris, modo communicare; ita quidem ut opportuna praestituantur normae, quibus haec eadem vota ac proposita ad rem feliciter deducantur.

Interea vero supernarum gratiarum auspicem Nostraeque benevolentiae testem cum tibi, Dilecte Fili Noster, tum iis, qui Pontificio huic Operi suam sollertem navant operam, iisque singulis universis, qui ad hanc causam promovendam eo praesertim die, qui statuatur, conferent, Apostolicam Benedictionem amantissime impertimus.

Datum Romae, apud Sanctum Petrum, die iv mensis Decembris, anno MDCCCCL, Pontificatus Nostri duodecimo.

PIUS PP. XII

BOOK REVIEWS

Immortal Fire. By Sister Mary Just, O.P. (Maryknoll Sister.) Pp. vi + 598. (B. Herder, 33 Queen Square, London, W.C. £2 16s.)

HERE is a book that will please the lover of foreign missions. In scope, it ranges from St Paul, Apostle of the Nations, to the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Holy See and the Chinese Republic in 1943. It has ten pages of bibliography and twenty-three pages of index.

The English reader is likely to turn to *W* in the index to see what sort of representation the great Anglo-Saxon missionaries get. He will not be disappointed; they are all there: Walburga, helper of St Boniface in Germany (she was his niece); Wigbert, English apostle of Frisia; Willehad, English apostle of Frisia and Saxony; Willibald, helper of St Boniface in Germany (he was Walburga's brother); Willibrord, English missionary in Frisia; Winibald (brother of Willibald and Walburga), helper of St Boniface in Germany. The great Boniface himself has no distinctive sub-title in the index, because he needs none.

To the person of ordinary general knowledge, the thirteenth century is the great century of philosophy and theology, of Gothic building at its best, of the mendicant orders preaching throughout the length and breadth of Europe; it is not generally thought of as a missionary century. In *Immortal Fire* we have the spectacle of Raymond Lull tackling the greatest of all missionary problems, the conversion of the Moors, and labouring to found what might be called chairs of missiology in Rome, Bologna, Paris, Oxford, Sala-

manca. We see, also, bands of Franciscans and Dominicans setting out, at the behest of the Holy See, as missionaries to Mongolia in an attempt to convert the Tartars. There is a fine picture of Friar John of Montecorvino stepping out bravely to evangelize China.

The story of the two Americas is told with great charm. St Francis Solano, the Spanish Franciscan, puts his New Testament in his pocket and his fiddle under his arm when he goes to meet the Indians of Peru; the fiddle helps him make a good composition of place, with the Indians squatting round him to listen to his tunes, before he starts on the real meditation of the day. In North America, in the seventeenth century, John Brébeuf, the French Jesuit, is conducting a great apostolate among the Hurons. The savage Iroquois caught him in the end, and spent three hours torturing him in the hope he would wince. Wince he would not, so they split his skull with a tomahawk.

The book is full of good things, including a picture of the seven Franciscan Missionaries of Mary the Boxers put to death, with one of them getting on with her knitting whilst she waited for martyrdom; it is a realistic touch that brings martyrdom in the mission fields home to one with a contemporary poignancy.

The sad thing about the book is its price; fifty-six shillings is quite a quantity of money in a country where money seems to get scarcer, at any rate, less availing, week by week.

S. M. S.

The Franciscans Came First. By Fanchon Royer. Pp. 208; 16 illustrations; end-map. (St. Anthony Guild Press, Paterson, N. Jersey. No price given.)

THIS is a fascinating "story-book" as well as a "history-book". The author is recognized as an expert on the Indian missions of the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries; she provides a rich bibliography. But she does not hesitate to "lighten and clarify" the text by "dialogue", frankly imaginary, but to the point and never too colloquial. There is a true Franciscan atmosphere in these pages—at times, that almost of the *Fioretti*. The intention both of Pope and kings in sending out these missions was essentially an apostolic one; it is terribly sad to read how often this was betrayed not only by soldiers and military captains but by governors. It would be sadder still if we had to follow the degeneration of the Spanish and Portuguese Governments at home during the "century of enlightenment" which worked nothing but havoc in Mexico and South America.

Yet there were other causes, not to Catholic credit, which joined in leading up to the frightful Mexican massacres that we are so soon forgetting. But this book exempts us from brooding over that. It starts with the scholar Pedro de Gante (of Ghent) who not till he was forty joined the Franciscans as a lay-brother, and yet laboured for almost fifty years more as pioneer teacher of the Natives. (The authoress gives us a glossary—but not any hints as to how to pronounce Aztec and other names so largely composed of x's!) Toribio de Motolinía ("of Poverty") is regarded as having won the "first great victory for God": Bishop Juan de Zumárraga was doomed to fight hard against Spanish cruelty, but to him was sent, as reward, the Indian who brought the figure of Our Lady of Guadalupe on his *tilma*. Perhaps the "first Road-Builder", Fray Sebastian de Aparicio, brings us closest to the earliest Franciscan days, so enchanting are his miracles, so sublime his prayer. His joyous simplicity may well have been equalled by that of Fray Margil de Jesus, "the great walker", but we have not room more than to mention Junipero Serra, "the first Californian", and really it is hardly worth just naming these miraculous men without also telling at least one anecdote about each! This is emphatically a book also for schools; under God, it may prove the greatest stimulus to missionary apostolate.

C. C. M.

Saint Ignatius Loyola. By Francis Thompson. Pp. 192. (Clonmore & Reynolds. 12s. 6d.)

ESPECIALLY commissioned—and undertaken with rather unexpected alacrity—this *Life of St Ignatius* made its first appearance posthumously in the elaborately illustrated edition of 1909. It made no pretence of adding to the facts already known: none but the obvious sources were utilized; but in spite of the countless biographies in existence there was room for such a modern account of the saint's life, written (says Fr Pollen in his original Introduction) "with a simplicity and vivacity that makes it living, intelligible and convincing".

The poet's mode of operation was not the best suited to a sustained work in prose. The manuscript would be delivered a few pages at a time—"three," we are told, "were a passport to a pound". It may be this that gives a certain impression of unevenness. The Thompsonian mannerisms, though not obtrusive, are unmistakable; here and there, too, there is a subtle whiff of Edwardianism in the sixteenth-century air. But if these are faults, they are comparatively

unimportant. The essentials are here: negatively, the absence of the mawkish and conventional; positively, that quality of literary sincerity that consists in truly "assimilating" the material—for which much might be said of the biographer's qualifications—and, as we should naturally expect, the life-giving use of words.

It was time this book was made available again; if for no other reason, as a badly needed model for the writing of saints' lives. Compared with the sumptuous first edition, the format is austere; but austerity is all we can afford today. There is a new Introduction by Fr Hugh Kelly, S.J., and the Stonyhurst silver head is reproduced for a frontispiece.

A. G. S.

Psycho-chirurgie. Cahiers Laennec, March 1951. Pp. 64. (Paris: Lethielleux.) 175 frs.

FOR several years now the quarterly *Cahiers Laennec* have been devoted each to the consideration of some specific medico-moral problem, and since the *Cahiers* are based on original lectures delivered at the Centre Laennec, whose close connexion with the Paris medical school makes it possible to draw on the highest medical authority and ensure a fully informed treatment of the matter, they cannot fail to be of interest to both priests and doctors. The present number, which is concerned with Pre-frontal Leucotomy, maintains the general high standard. An opening paper on the brain gives the anatomical and physiological background to the operation and explains its nature. Two subsequent papers deal with the changes produced by Leucotomy; and finally there is a brief theological note by Père Tesson of the Institut Catholique.

The *Cahier* notes that the operation was at first viewed with great reserve by French medical opinion, and was taken up much more slowly in France than in either America or this country. The account given of post-operative psychological changes is full and clear, but perhaps a little too systematic, so that it is not always easy to distinguish between fact and interpretation—many would disagree with this and doubt whether our knowledge and understanding of the operation is yet sufficiently advanced to enable us with certainty to impose any interpretation. Dr Bertagna in his paper, though he acknowledges that the operation has produced beneficial results and enabled thousands to return to normal life, emphasizes that there are a number of relapses, and even goes so far as to accuse "Anglo-Saxon publications" of ignoring these in

their statistics. It is true that the enormous development of literature on the subject renders it difficult to keep abreast of all the latest developments, but one feels that this accusation would hardly have been made by one familiar with the admirably conceived British and American accounts which have appeared in the last year or so. Incidentally, both British and American authorities emphasize the need of supplementing the operation by a proper period of rehabilitation, but we do not recollect any reference to this need in the *Cahier*. Among the conclusions reached in the theological note is that a leucotomized person should rarely be accepted for the religious life or the priesthood, and should generally be dissuaded from marrying, in some cases even be placed under a moral obligation not to marry. It seems difficult to accept—*a priori*, as it were—so drastic a general prescription; one would prefer to examine each individual case and treat it on its merits. However, our greatest quarrel with Père Tesson is that his note is all too short; true, the preceding papers deal incidentally with many moral considerations, but how welcome from him would have been the full and systematic moral treatment of the subject which he is so well qualified to give. These few critical observations should not be allowed to obscure the general excellence of the *Cahier*, which offers an admirably clear account of its subject.

J. D.

Unless Some Man Show Me. Alexander Jones, S.T.L., L.S.S. Pp. 162. (Sheed & Ward, 1951. 8s. 6d.)

IN these days, when the Church is leaving scholars free to adopt, if not actually encouraging, a more liberal approach to the Old Testament than we have seen for centuries, it is essential to have very clear ideas on what the traditional doctrine of inspiration and inerrancy involves and (perhaps more important) does not involve. It is equally important that such questions should be made intelligible to the average reader, who has just as much need as the specialist of the nourishment contained in the Bible. And so, "in case this weighty subject matter combines with the author's distinguished qualifications to produce in prospective readers both alarm and despondency, we hasten to add that few eminent Scripture scholars can have got so much enjoyment out of their learning as Father Jones, and fewer still can have displayed so lively a capacity for passing it on". And in case such a heavy-handed publishers' blurb should put anyone off, let him be assured that Father Jones

really does get to grips with these urgent questions, and that he really can be read with the feet on the mantelpiece. One wonders on which achievement to congratulate him the more.

The book starts with an introductory chapter on the precise meaning of inspiration and one on the true purpose and pitfalls of interpretation. The two following chapters on literary forms should be read again and again until the budding exegete has realized that to ask "Is it true?" is often to approach the whole problem from the wrong angle. After all, is it true that "a certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho"? Each literary form has its own type of truth, and it is no use looking for that truth until we understand the precise literary form in which it is clothed. When Father Jones proceeds to apply this principle to the Cantic and the book of Jonas, the reader will begin to appreciate that these questions are rather more than mere speculation; and if he will read on (and he will find it hard not to) he will realize even more how practical they are in solving the knotty problems of the first three chapters of Genesis: The Six Days of Creation, Pantheism, Babylonian Parallels, Evolution and Original Sin. The next chapter is something of a digression, but has anyone ever written on the cabalism of numbers (and let no one imagine that the Bible is immune from it) in such a fascinating way? But the chapter *And God Said to Moses* is certainly the most useful in the book, for the principles of interpretation are applied not to individual texts but to a whole section of the Old Testament, and when the reader has understood how carefully he has to tread in attributing directly to God laws and customs which God only tolerated and used, he will be far on the way to a better understanding of the rest of the Old Testament. The chapter on the Temple shows how well Father Jones knows his way round the Old Testament, and with what a masterly stroke he can draw a design through it into the New. The book ends with two chapters written with an eye to helping the Jew to a right understanding of the Old Testament, for after all it is his Bible too.

All the articles in the book have already appeared in the *Catholic Gazette* (1948-1950). It was a happy thought that made Father Jones decide to publish them in a more permanent form, for, excellent as that magazine is, it has far fewer readers than this book deserves. Perhaps the articles have lost some of their original spontaneity in being eased into their new format, and certainly one misses the footnotes, where Father Jones sparkles at his best. Many, it is true, have been incorporated into the text, but here they interrupt the flow of thought and tend to confuse the issue. Perhaps a later edition (and

one prays that such a useful book will have many) might return them to the bottom of the page, where they would remain just the delightful digressions that they are. Arabic numerals would also be welcome in place of the rather cumbersome Roman in text references.

H. J. R.

Catholic Library Practice. Edited by Brother David Martin, C.S.C.

Two volumes. Pp. I, viii + 244; II, viii + 276. (The University of Portland Press, Portland, Oregon. No price stated.)

CATHOLICS in the United States may justly claim that they have made exceptional progress in applying modern library technique to all branches of Catholic education. With this symposium, they have now produced a survey of all their activities in that direction; it registers the results achieved, formulates the problems encountered, and makes valuable suggestions for future endeavour.

The work is almost exclusively concerned with the American situation; much of what is said on practical matters is therefore less relevant to conditions in England. On such points, however, the essays remain interesting, as giving an insight into some aspects of Catholic life in the United States; and a perusal of them should also be stimulating to all who are working to promote a similar library movement in this country. Nevertheless, some problems that are treated are of a more universal character. One of the more important of these arises from the defects of the current systems of classification and cataloguing, considered from a Catholic point of view. This question has been studied in America, and some account is given of the results achieved. An essay is devoted to Catholic subject-headings, but it is disappointing that there should be no special one on classification; a few paragraphs are given to it in the essay on the major seminary library. The best contribution of general interest is undoubtedly the revised reprint of the essay on Catholic bibliography by Father Stephen Brown, S.J., of Dublin. Most of the essays close with detailed book-lists, and each volume is provided with an index, the one in the second covering both volumes.

The editor has, perhaps, attempted to make the work too comprehensive; this has prevented an adequate treatment of many matters, which are merely broached. A deeper level of approach would also have increased the value of those essays that are of a less technical character. Considered, however, as a handbook covering the whole subject-matter, the work is an interesting and useful addition to Catholic literature on the library.

C. D.

Struggle—Our Destiny. By Rev. William Tobin. Pp. xii + 165.
(Bruce Publishing Co., Milwaukee. \$2.50.)

FEW people reach middle-age years without experiencing the truth of Job's assertion that man's life on earth is a warfare, a ceaseless series of battles with a hundred foes; and the struggle continues for the whole span of life, any cessation of active hostility among one's enemies being but a breathing-space of preparation for fresh encounters. This is the explanation of *Struggle—Our Destiny*, the title chosen by Father Tobin for his attractive book. It is a series of regular weekly broadcasts given in South Carolina three years ago.

Having surveyed the field of battle, and parleyed with friends and allies, the author concentrates his attention upon man, the "soldier", whose strength and weaknesses are closely examined. The penalty of failure and the rich reward of victory are discussed, and then is shown the final glory of the triumphant host of true Christians assembled under the banner of their Leader and in the presence of their Queen. The book is replete with arresting interest, the work of an imaginative artist whose pictures never fade.

L. T. H.

Stimuli. By R. A. Knox. Pp. ix + 148. (Sheed & Ward. 10s. 6d.)

"NON nova sed nove" is the advice given to a preacher. Old truths will not affect the hearer unless they are presented with freshness and originality. Nor must their presentation be dragged out to Victorian lengths; twenty minutes is the maximum time for an ordinary sermon.

These seventy-one discourses of Monsignor Knox have indeed a refreshing pointedness. "Sharp goads they are to sting us", these fundamental verities, when refurbished on the whetstone of his mind. They are very short, five hundred words in length, owing to the requirements of the pulpit from which they were originally preached, the *Sunday Times*. But they give plenty to think over, whether they deal with the liturgical cycle, the lives of certain saints, or the matters and troubles of every-day life. But, though they sting, they do not hurt or wound; the charity and consolation that come from a steady gaze on the supernatural are their outstanding characteristic.

J. C.

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